

THE LATE
BISHOP of *LONDON*

Dr. *GIBSON's*

Five Pastoral Letters

To the PEOPLE of his DIOCESE;
Particularly to those of the two Great Cities
of *London* and *Westminster*.

The THREE FIRST

In Defence of the GOSPEL-REVELATION,
and by way of PRESERVATIVE against
the late Writings in Favour of INFI-
DELITY.

The FOURTH

Against LUKEWARMNESS on one Hand, and
ENTHUSIASM on the other.

And the FIFTH and LAST

On the late REBELLION, and exciting to a Serious
Reformation of LIFE and MANNERS. With a
POSTSCRIPT, setting forth the *Danger* and
Mischiefs of POPERY.



L O N D O N:

Printed and Sold by E. OWEN in *Warwick-Lane*, and
W. JOHNSTON in *Ludgate-Street*, 1760.

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BISHOP of LONDON

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To the BISHOP of the Diocese;
Universally to those of the two Great Cities
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The THREE FIRST
In Defence of the Gospel-Revelation,
and by way of PRESERVATIVE against
the late Writings and Writings of IN-
FIDELITY.



The
Against HERESY, and the
HETEROGENEOUS, and
And the FIRST and LAST

Of the last Revelation, and extending to a certain
Reformation of LIFE and MANNERS. With a
POSTSCRIPT, touching the DEATH and
Manner of DEATH.



L O N D O N

Printed and sold by E. QUINN in Strand, near
St. James's Church, in Great Britain.

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In the Year 1706, upon an Address from several of the Gentlemen and Clergy of Lancashire, Orders were given for taking a strict Survey of the State of Popery in the Kingdom, and a Proclamation issued,

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The Bishop of London's
PASTORAL LETTER

To the People of his Diocese ;
Particularly, to those of the two Great
Cities of *London and Westminster.*

Occasioned by some late Writings in Favour
of INFIDELITY.



THE Office I bear in the Church of Christ; and my particular Relation to this Diocese, oblige me to study your Spiritual Good, and to warn you of any Danger to which I see you expos'd, either in Principle or Practice. For tho' you are committed, as to your Spiritual Affairs, to the more immediate Care and Direction of Parochial Ministers, yet not so, as to cease to be a Part of the
A Episcopal

Episcopal Care, especially in Cases where the Concern is general, and the Dangers such as may not fall under the Observation of every particular Pastor. And I am not without hope, that what I shall say to you, will be more generally attended to, and make an Impression somewhat stronger, as it comes to you directly from the Hands of your Bishop; and, being not spoken but written, you will have better Opportunity to peruse, consider, and apply it, with such Care and Deliberation as the Importance of the Matter deserves.

This Method, I own, is uncommon, but so is the *Occasion* too; and no where so great and pressing, as in these two large and populous Cities; whether we consider the Variety of Temptations, or the powerful Influence of bad Examples; the corrupt Principles and Practices which first spring up here, or the quick and easy Propagation of them from hence into all Parts of the Kingdom; which makes the checking and suppressing them here as much as possible, to be truly a *National Concern*.

They who live in these great Cities, or have had frequent Recourse to them, and have any Concern for Religion, must have observ'd to their great Grief, ' That Prophaneness and Impiety are grown bold and open; ' That a new Sort of Vice of a very horrible Nature, and almost unknown before in these Parts of the World, was springing up and gaining Ground among us, if it had not been check'd by the seasonable Care of the Civil Administration; ' That in some late Writings, *Publick Stews* have been openly vindicated, and *Publick Vices* recommended to the Protection of the Government, as *Publick Benefits*; and, ' That great Pains have been taken to make Men
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easy in their Vices, and to deliver them from the Restraints of Conscience, by undermining all Religion, and promoting Atheism and Infidelity; and what adds to the Danger, by doing it under specious Colours and Pretences of several Kinds. One, under Pretence of opposing the Encroachments of Popery, thereby to recommend himself to the unwary Protestant Reader, has labour'd at once to set aside all Christian Ordinances, and the very Being of a Christian Ministry, and a Christian Church: Another, under Colour of great Zeal for the Jewish Dispensation, and the literal Meaning of Scripture, has been endeavouring to overthrow the Foundations of the Christian Religion: A third, pretending to raise the Actions and Miracles of our Saviour to a more exalted and spiritual Meaning, has labour'd to take away the Reality of them, and by that to destroy one of the principal Evidences of Christianity. Others have shewn a great Zeal for *Natural* Religion in Opposition to *Reveal'd*, with no other View, as it seems, than to get rid of the Restraints of *Reveal'd* Religion, and to make Way for unbounded Enjoyment of their corrupt Appetites and vicious Inclinations, no less contrary in Reality to the Obligations of *Natural* Religion, than of *Reveal'd*. And all, or most of these Writers, under Colour of pleading for the Liberties of Mankind, have run into an unprecedented *Licentiousness*, in treating the serious and important Concerns of Religion, in a *ludicrous* and *reproachful* Manner.

These are Things, which no serious Christian, I might add, no serious Deist, who has any Sense of God upon his Mind, and any Regard to Virtue and Morality, or even to common Decency and

Order, can behold and reflect on, without a very sensible Concern. Much more ought the Ministers of the Gospel to be awake, and to double their Care over the Souls committed to their Charge, when they see so many Devices set on Foot to corrupt and poison them, both in their Principles and Morals. Accordingly, on this Occasion, many excellent Books have been published in Defence of the Christian Religion, against those Writings in Favour of Infidelity. In which Books, the Authors have, with great Learning, Strength and Perspicuity, maintain'd the Cause of Religion, and detected the Sophistry of its Adversaries; whose Art it has been, in some Cases, to lay hold on little Circumstances, as if the Whole of Christianity depended upon them, and by that to draw the Reader's Attention from the most plain and substantial Arguments for the Truth of it; and at other Times, by *perplexing* and *misapplying* the plainest Proofs, to make Way for their own Interpretations, and for imposing them more easily upon unwary and ignorant Readers; and, which is no less unfair and disingenuous, to misrepresent the Sense of judicious Writers, and to pick weak Arguments out of those who are less guarded, in order to expose the Whole as ridiculous. To defeat these indirect Arts and Endeavours, the same learned Writers have taken off those false Colours, and placed the Evidences of Christianity upon their true Foundation; and, by setting them in their proper and genuine Light, and representing them in their united Strength, have abundantly shewn, that no impartial and unprejudic'd Person, who considers them with Attention, can doubt of their

their Force and Sufficiency to convince any reasonable and well-disposed Mind.

But because these Writings are too large and too learned, to be read and examined by the Generality of People ; and consist of such a Chain of Reasoning, as Persons of common Capacity cannot easily follow and comprehend ; who, as they have less Leisure as well as Ability to enter into particular Examinations, are more liable to be imposed upon, and more like to be attack'd by the Enemies of Christianity : For this Reason, I have thought it incumbent upon me, to draw up for your Use, some few Rules and Cautions, which are short and easy, and which being frequently perused, and duly attended to, may be a Means, under the Blessing of God, to preserve sincere and unprejudic'd Christians from these dangerous Infections.

I. *Be sure that you have a Mind sincerely desirous to know the Will of God, and firmly resolved to comply with whatever shall appear to be his Will.* This is a necessary Preparation for the Knowledge of Divine Truths, ' To be willing to know, and ready to practice ; without which, Men not only may be easily deceived by others, but are in effect determined before-hand to deceive themselves. Where there is an Unwillingness to part with Lusts and Pleasures and worldly Interests, there must of course be a *Desire* that the Christian Religion should not be true, and a *Willingness* to favour and embrace any Argument that is brought against it, and to cherish any Doubts and Scruples that shall be raised concerning it. From a Mind so disposed and so prejudiced in Favour of the Enemy,

my, Christianity cannot expect a fair Hearing, but on the contrary all the Disadvantage and Opposition that Lusts and Passions can suggest. And therefore our Saviour lays down this as the true Foundation of Divine Knowledge, *1 If any Man will do God's Will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God,* implying, that a sincere Desire to know the Truth, with an honest Disposition to conform our Wills and Affections to it when known, is the best Preservative against Error in Religion, and carries with it a well grounded Assurance of the Divine Aid, to assist Persons so disposed in their Enquiries after Truth. And the Words do also carry in them this other Assertion, That whoever is *not* first sincerely disposed to do the Will of God, he shall be in great Danger of *not* knowing the Doctrine whether it be of God, and of remaining in a State of Ignorance and Error.

II. *As a farther Proof of your Sincerity, be careful and diligent in the Use of those Means which God has afforded you for the right Understanding of his Will:* Particularly, in reading the Scriptures, and making them familiar to you, and comparing one Part of them with another; by which a moderate Capacity may make considerable Advancement in the Knowledge of Religion. And you must not fail to pray to God, that in all your Searches and Enquiries after the Truth, he will be pleased to guide and direct you by his Holy Spirit; which he is always ready to vouchsafe to every humble and sincere Mind. And if after all your own Endeavours, you meet with Difficulties of

1 John vii. 17.

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any Kind, have Recourse to some Persons of Piety and Learning, upon whose Knowledge and Judgment you believe you may safely rely. Only beware, that the Difficulties be not owing either to a *Willingness* on your Part to raise them, or to the indulging yourselves in over curious and needless Enquiries.

III. *After you have secured the Sincerity of your own Hearts, attend to the Lives of those who endeavour to seduce you, or whom you see endeavouring to seduce others:* Whether, in the general Course of them, they have been sober and regular, and virtuous; or, on the contrary, vicious and irregular. If the latter; do not wonder that they take so much Pains to reason themselves into Infidelity, without which their Minds cannot be easy in the Enjoyment of their Vices; nor that they become Advocates for it, and are industrious to gain Profelytes, on purpose to keep themselves in Countenance, and to make their Vices less infamous, by being more fashionable. Take it for granted, that such Men are Enemies to Religion, for no other Reason, but because Religion is an Enemy to their Luxury and Lusts. For, as it has been already observed under the first Head, that a Mind virtuously dispos'd and sincerely desirous to understand the Will of God, is the best Preparation for the Knowledge of the Truth; so is a vicious Mind and a *Willingness* and *Inclination* to disbelieve, the natural and necessary Parent of *Error* and *Delusion*.

And as some are naturally led by their *Lusts*, to oppose the Doctrines of Christianity; so others are led by *Pride* and *Self-conceit*, to raise Doubts and Disputes concerning any Opinions and Doctrines

which are generally receiv'd and establish'd, how evident soever it may be, that the Doctrines they oppose are agreeable to all the Principles of Virtue in general, and of Christianity in particular. Such Men disdain to think in the *common Way*; and valuing themselves upon a more than ordinary Share of Knowledge and Penetration, do always affect Novelty and Singularity in Opinion. Which *opposing* Humour was well express'd by one of our modern Advocates for Infidelity, in what he is reported to have said of one of his Fellow-labourers to this Effect, 'That if his own Opinions were *establish'd* To-day, he would oppose them To-morrow.' When therefore you observe any Person to be eager and forward in raising Doubts and Scruples about the Doctrines of Christianity, who also on *other* Occasions appears to take a Delight in disputing and wrangling, and opposing the general Sentiments of Mankind; wonder not at it, but place it, as you well may, to the Account of Pride and Self-conceit; and the natural Effects of these, a Spirit of Contradiction.

IV. *When you meet with any Book upon the Subject of Religion, that is written in a ludicrous or unserious Manner; take it for granted that it proceeds from a deprav'd Mind, and is written with an irreligious Design.* Such Books are calculated not to inform the Understanding, but to corrupt the Heart. There is no Subject, how grave or sublime soever in itself, but may be turn'd into Jest and Ridicule; and by being so turn'd, may be made to appear mean and despicable. And the Promoters of Infidelity very well know, that if by this Artifice they can take off the Reverence that

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that belongs to Religion, the Minds of the People are easily carried into a Disregard of it, and an Indifference about it; which is of course an Inlet to Vice; and Vice quickly improves an Indifference about Religion, into a *Prejudice* against it, and by Degrees into a profess'd *Enmity* to it. Be sure therefore to avoid this Snare; and do not only lay aside, but abhor all such Books as turn Religion into Jest and Mirth: For, next to the Writing and publishing them, there is not a more certain Sign of a depraved and irreligious Mind, than the finding any Degree of *Satisfaction* and *Complacency* in them.

V. *Be not persuaded to part with Revelation under Pretence of relying on Natural Reason as your only Guide.* For Reason, without the Assistance given it by Revelation, has in fact appeared to be a very insufficient Guide. For which we may appeal to the endless and irreconcilable Differences among the ancient Philosophers, not only in Speculative Opinions, but in the great Rules of Duty, as to what is right or wrong, lawful or unlawful; and even in the *chief End* or *Good* which Man ought to propose to himself in order to his Happiness. And it would be very strange to suppose, that the Generality of Mankind have sufficient *Leisure* and *Ability* to enter into the Depths of Philosophy, and to compare the Opinions of the several Philosophers, and to determine, upon the Foot of natural Reason, which of them is in the Right, and which in the Wrong. And much more extraordinary would it be to expect, that for the Sake of such an uncertain and impracticable Rule, they should lay aside a plain, clear and uni-

form Scheme of Duty, obvious to the meanest Capacities, and fully attested to come from God.

But suppose the Philosophers had furnished us with a *consistent* and *uniform* Scheme of moral Duties, which they are very far from having done; there are many other Things that Revelation has discovered to us, which were either wholly unknown, or known very imperfectly to the best and wisest among them, and yet are absolutely necessary to give Mankind a full Knowledge of their Duty, and to make them proceed in it with Comfort and Constancy. Such are, ‘The Way in which an *acceptable Worship* may be performed to the Deity; ‘The certain Method of obtaining Pardon of Sin, and Reconciliation to God, and supernatural Assistance to enable us to do his Will; and, ‘That most powerful Motive to Duty and Obedience, the *full Assurance* of Rewards and Punishments in another Life, according to our Behaviour in this; without a firm Persuasion of which (much firmer than any Philosopher ever arriv’d to) it is morally impossible that Mankind, in this corrupt State, should be restrained from Excess and Violence, and preserved in a regular and orderly Course of Duty.

But the Truth is, *Natural Religion*, as set up against Revelation, by our present Advocates for Infidelity, is very different from that which the wisest of the ancient Philosophers discover’d by the Light of Reason; and this in some very material Points. With the one, the Government of the *Appetites* was their great Foundation of Virtue and Goodness; but with the other, the great Aim seems to be to *gratify* them; and so, their main Objection against Christianity must be, that it requires
Self-denial,

PASTORAL LETTER. II

Self-denial, and lays Restraints upon the irregular Appetites of Mankind. The ancient Moralists labour'd by all the Arguments they could find, to give themselves what they thought a *comfortable* Hope of the Immortality of the Soul and a future State; but there is too much Cause to believe, that our modern Reasoners do not *wish* or *desire* that these Things may be true; on the contrary, the great Aim of all their Endeavours seems to be, to root the Apprehension of them out of the World. The wisest and most learned of the Philosophers of old, saw and lamented their own Ignorance, and the Imperfection of the utmost Knowledge that Natural Reason can attain to, and the great Necessity there was of some further Light. But our modern Philosophers are self-sufficient, so far from desiring further Light of any kind, that it is one Part of their Character to disclaim all Assistance, even though it be from a Divine Revelation. The Ancients preserv'd the greatest Reverence for Things Sacred; but their pretended Successors in our Times, turn every Thing that is Sacred into Jest and Ridicule. So that Natural Religion, as now contended for among us, seems not to be meant for a Rule of Duty, but only a specious Name, to be set up against Revelation, and to prove Christianity, not only as to the *doctrinal*, but even the *moral* Part of it, to be a needless Institution. And certainly there cannot be a greater Sign of a *perverse* and *deprav'd* Mind, than the *endeavouring* to depreciate it; 'As it is an Institution that contains in it the Religion of Nature explain'd, improv'd, and rais'd to greater Degrees of Purity and Perfection; (re-

gulating the inward Thoughts as well as the outward Actions; requiring us to abstain not only from Sin, but from all *Tendencies* to it; not only from Evil, but from all *Appearance* of Evil; commanding us to love and do Good to our *Enemies* as well as *Friends*; and enforcing the strict Observance both of Moral and Christian Duties, by Motives and Obligations stronger by far, than any that Natural Reason can suggest;) ‘As it lays down a plain and easy Rule of Life, adapted to the meanest as well as the highest Capacities; ‘As the Precepts of it are excellently calculated for the Peace and Happiness of Mankind, by laying the strongest Restraints upon their irregular Passions, (Anger, Hatred, and Revenge,) and every where inculcating the most amiable Lessons of Meekness, Benevolence, and Forgiveness; ‘As it requires and enforces a strict Observance of the Duties belonging to the several Relations of Mankind to one another, on which the Peace and Order not only of private Families, but of publick Societies, so greatly depend; ‘As it furnishes us with the best Motives and most substantial Arguments for Comfort in the Time of Affliction, and enables us to bear all the Evils of this Life with Patience and Contentment; and, finally, ‘As it opens to us a most comfortable View of Happiness and Immortality in a future State. How such an Institution should become the Object of their Hatred and Dislike, is not to be accounted for, but from somewhat very corrupt and irregular in their Hearts; which makes them first averse to the Purity it requires, and, for the sake of that, profess’d Enemies to the Institution itself.

PASTORAL LETTER. 13

VI. *Do not reckon the Truth of any Dispensation or Doctrine to be really Doubtful, merely because some Men affect to make a Doubt of it.* There are Monsters in Mind as well as in Body; and it is an old Observation, that there was no Opinion so absurd, but what some Philosopher had held. The Truth is, Follies and Absurdities in Opinion are without End, where Men give themselves up to Scepticism, and at the same Time are positive and conceited, and afraid that they shall not sufficiently distinguish themselves, and transmit their Names to Posterity with Advantage, but by broaching odd and singular Notions, and by thinking differently from the Generality of Mankind; which leads them of course to oppose whatever is generally receiv'd and establish'd. And when the Doctrines, which they set themselves to overthrow, are such as curb and cross the corrupt and inordinate Desires of Nature, and their own Doctrines come recommended by giving full Liberty and Indulgence to the irregular Appetites of Men, and by lessening their Apprehensions of a future Account, it is not to be wonder'd that they gain Profelytes.

VII. *When a Revelation is sufficiently attested to come from God, let it not weaken your Faith, if you cannot clearly see the Fitness and Expedience of every Part of it.* This would be, to make yourselves as knowing as God; whose Wisdom is infinite, and the Depth of whose Dispensations, with the Reasons and Ends of them, are not to be fathom'd by our short and narrow Comprehensions. God has given us sufficient Capacity to know him, and to learn our Duty, and to judge when a Revelation

velation comes from him ; which is all the Knowledge that is needful to us in our present State. And it is the greatest Folly as well as Presumption in any Man, to enter into the Counsels of God, and to make himself a Judge of the Wisdom of his Dispensations to such a Degree, as to conclude that this or that Revelation cannot come from God, because he cannot see in every Respect the *Fitness* and *Reasonableness* of it : To say, for Instance, that either we had no Need of a Redeemer, or that a better Method might have been contriv'd for our Redemption ; and upon the whole, not to give God Leave to save us his own Way. In these Cases, the true Inference is, that the Revelation is therefore wise, and good, and just, and fit to be received and submitted to by us, because we have sufficient Reason to believe that it comes from God. For so far he has made us competent Judges, inasmuch as Natural Reason informs us what are the proper Evidences of a Divine Revelation ; but he has not let us into the *Springs* of his Administration, nor shewn us the whole Compass of it, nor the Connexion of the several Parts with one another ; nor, by Consequence can we be capable to judge adequately of the Fitness of the *Means* which he makes use of to attain the *Ends*. On the contrary, the *attempting* to make *such* a Judgment, is to set ourselves in the Place of God, and to forget that we are frail Men ; that is, short-sighted and ignorant Creatures, who know very little of Divine Matters, further than it has pleas'd God to reveal them to us.

VIII. *Suffer not yourselves to be drawn from the more plain and direct Proofs of the Truth of Christianity, to Proofs, which however good, are less obvious to common Capacities.* This is an Artifice usual with Writers who engage in a bad Cause; to labour, in the first Place, to fix the Merits of the Cause they oppose, upon some Point which has either little Relation to it, or at least is not the *main* Point; and then to run into such Proofs as are most remote and intricate; and both these, on purpose to draw the Reader's Attention from the true State of the Case, and from the Proofs which are most plain, strong and direct. There are many Sorts of Proofs, by which the Truth of Christianity is supported; as 1, TYPES. 2, PROPHECIES. 3, The GENERAL EXPECTATION of Christ's coming at that Time. 4, The MIRACLES he wrought. 5, His PREDICTIONS of his own Death, and Resurrection, and of many other Events, which were punctually fulfill'd: And 6, The speedy and wonderful PROPAGATION of the Gospel, after his Death. But all these, tho' in themselves cogent and conclusive, are not equally *plain* and *clear* to every Capacity.

1. The TYPES which the Christian Writers of all Ages have insisted on, as prefiguring a *suffering* Saviour, could not be applied to Christ by the *Jews* who lived before his coming, because they expected a *temporal* Prince and a triumphant Saviour; but they are expressly applied to him, and represented as centring in him, by the Inspir'd Writers of the New Testament, and particularly by *St. Paul*, who receiv'd his Instructions immediately from *Heaven*. The Paschal Lamb, for Instance,

Instance, which was slain every Year at the Feast of the Passover, and was by God's special Appointment to be ¹ *without Blemish*, and to be slain only at ² *Jerusalem*, and the ³ *Bones of it not to be broken*; was most manifestly a Type of our Saviour's Death; which, besides an Agreement in the Circumstances already mention'd, was on the very same Day, and on the very same Part of the Day, that the Paschal Lamb was appointed to be slain; and, by a signal Providence, a Bone of him was not broken; though it was a known Custom to break the Bones of those who were crucified, and the Bones of the two who were crucified with him were actually broken. Well then might *John* the Baptist say to the People, ⁴ *Behold the Lamb of God*; and *St. Paul* style him, ⁵ *Christ our Passover*; and *St. Peter* speak of him, ⁶ *as of a Lamb without Blemish and without Spot*.

2. In like manner, the PROPHECIES of the Old Testament, as foretelling the Time, Place, and other Circumstances of the Birth, Life, Death, and Resurrection of the Messiah, with many Particulars concerning the Nature of his Kingdom, and the Times of it, are not only applied to him by the Inspired Writers of the New Testament, and by the succeeding Christians in all Ages, but were so applied by the ancient Jewish Writers themselves, long before the coming of Christ into the World. From whence arose that *general Expectation* of his coming at that Time, which we

¹ Exod. xii. 5. ² Deut. xvi. 5, 6. ³ Exod. xii. 46. Num. ix. 12. ⁴ John i. 29. ⁵ 1-Cor. v. 7. ⁶ 1 Pet. i. 19.

find attested by the concurring Evidence of Jewish, Christian and Heathen Writers.

That a Messiah was *promised* in the Law and the Prophets, and that this was universally believ'd and acknowledg'd by the *Jews*, appears by the whole Tenor of St. *Paul's* and St. *Peter's* Discourses to them, as they are recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. Where we see plainly, the only Point in Dispute between them and the *Jews* was, Whether or no that Promise was *fulfill'd* in our Saviour? For as the Apostles constantly reason'd with them from the Prophecies and Predictions of the Old Testament, so all their Reasonings were to prove, that they were *fulfill'd* in him. We do not find, that any Doubt was rais'd by the *Jews* whether the Passages quoted from those Books, had been rightly applied to a Messiah by their own Teachers, or whether the Expectation there was of a great Deliverer, was well founded in the Scriptures; the only Thing, which the *Jews* themselves being Judges, wanted to be prov'd, was, that those Scriptures were rightly applied by the Apostles to *Jesus of Nazareth*, whom their Rulers had put to Death, but who by the Power of God was rais'd again to Life; of which the Apostles were Eye-witnesses, and the Truth of their Testimony was confirm'd by the miraculous Gifts and Powers of the Holy Ghost. This was the great Point in their Reasonings with the *Jews*, 'To prove that *Jesus* was the Person promised;' for which they made their Appeals to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and did it with great Success. At *Thessalonica*, where was a Synagogue of the *Jews*, St. *Paul* went in unto them, as his

Acts xvii. 1, 2, 3.

Manner

Manner was, and three Sabbath-days reason'd with them out of the Scriptures, opening and alledging, that Christ must needs have suffer'd and risen again from the Dead, and that this Jesus whom I preach unto you, is Christ. At ¹ *Damascus* he confounded the Jews which dwelt there, proving that this is the very Christ. So, in the Synagogue at ² *Berea*, he reason'd with them out of the Scriptures; and it is said in Commendation of the Jews there, that they receiv'd the Word with all Readiness of Mind, and search'd the Scriptures daily, whether these Things were so. Of the same Kind was his Discourse with the Jews at ³ *Antioch*; Of this Man's (David's) Seed, hath God, according to his Promise, rais'd unto Israel, a Saviour, Jesus: — Because they knew him not (viz. Christ,) nor yet the Voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath-day, they have fulfill'd them in condemning him.—The Promise which was made unto the Fathers, God hath fulfill'd the same to us their Children, in that he hath rais'd up Jesus again; according to what was prophesied by David and Isaiah, which is there set forth at large. Thus also he defends himself before Felix, ⁴ *This I confess unto thee, that after the Way which they call Heresy, so worship I the God of my Fathers, believing all Things which are written in the Law and the Prophets: and before Festus and Agrippa, ⁵ I am judg'd for the Hope of the Promise made of God unto our Fathers.—— Having obtain'd Help of God, I continue unto this Day; witnessing both to*

¹ Acts ix. 22. ² Acts xvii. 10, 11, 12. ³ Acts
xiii. 16, 17, 23, 27, 32, 33. ⁴ Acts xxiv. 14.
⁵ Acts xxvi. 6, 22, 27, 28.

small and great, saying none other Things, than those which the Prophets and Moses did say should come.

— King Agrippa, *believest thou the Prophets? I know that thou believest: To which Agrippa replied, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.* And when he was at Rome, he explained and testified to the Jews who came to him, the Kingdom of God; *persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the Law of Moses, and out of the Prophets, from Morning 'till Evening.*

The Acts of the Apostles give the like Account of St. ² Peter, who on the Day of Pentecost preach'd to the Jews upon the Evidence of the Scriptures, with such Success, that great Numbers gladly received his Word, and the same Day there were added to them about three thousand Souls. And a little after, upon his healing an impotent Man in ³ Solomon's Porch, and the People's running together to him, we have another Declaration of his to the same Purpose: Those Things which God beforehand had shew'd by the Mouth of all his Prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfill'd.— Whom the Heaven must receive, until the Time of Restitution of all Things, which God hath spoken by the Mouth of all his holy Prophets, since the World began. For Moses truly said unto the Fathers, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you: Yea, and all the Prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these Days. — ⁴ And many, which heard the Word, believed, and the Number of the Men was about five thousand.

¹ Acts xxviii. 23. ² Acts ii. 1, 41. ³ Acts iii. 18, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26. ⁴ Acts iv. 4.

Again in his Speech to *Cornelius*, and his Company.— ¹ *Him (Jesus) God raised up — and commanded us to preach to the People, and to testifie, that it is he which was ordain'd of God, to be the Judge of quick and dead; to him give all the Prophets Witness.*

The same Appeal to the Scriptures is made by *St. Stephen*: ² *This is that Moses, which said unto the Children of Israel, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you. — Which of the Prophets have not your Fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the just One, of whom ye have been now the Betrayers and Murderers.* And ³ *Philip* converts the Treasurer of *Queen Candace*, whom he found reading the 53d Chapter of *Isaiah*, by beginning at that Scripture, and preaching to him *Jesus*; upon which he believ'd, and was baptiz'd. And of *Apollos* it is said, that ⁴ *he was an eloquent Man, and mighty in the Scriptures; and that he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the Scriptures, that Jesus was the Christ.* This then was the Reasoning of the Apostles, and other holy Men, in order to the Conversion of the *Jews*; and it is no other than what *St. Paul* learnt by immediate Revelation; for he tells the *Corinthians*, that he delivered to them that which he received, how that *Christ* died for our Sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third Day, according to the Scriptures; and the other Apostles were instructed in the same Way of Reasoning by our ⁶ Saviour

¹ Acts x. 42, 43. ² Acts vii. 37, 52. ³ Acts viii. 30, &c. ⁴ Acts xviii. 24, 28. ⁵ 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4.
⁶ Luke xviii. 31, 34.

himself, who a little before his Passion took to him the Twelve, and said unto them, *Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and all Things that are written in the Prophets concerning the Son of Man, shall be accomplish'd.* But then they understood none of these Things; and therefore, after his Resurrection he opened their Understanding; first, of two of them, whom he met going to Emmaus, ¹ *O Fools, and slow of Heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken; ought not Christ to have suffered these Things, and to enter into his Glory? And beginning at Moses, and all the Prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures, the Things concerning himself:* and then of the Eleven, ² *These are the Words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all Things must be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their Understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third Day, and that Repentance and Remission of Sins should be preached in his Name among all Nations.*

Such frequent Appeals to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, to prove that Jesus was the Messiah, plainly suppose the Promise of a Messiah; and the Success they had, notwithstanding the Prejudices the Jews were under against a Suffering Messiah, shews the Propriety and Efficacy of this Argument in order to the Conviction of that People, to whom the Promise was made, and whose earnest Desire and Expectation of a Deliverer had

¹ Luke xxiv. 25, 26, 27.

46, 47.

² Luke xxiv. 44, 45,

led them of Course to be *familiarly acquainted* with the Prophecies concerning him.

But because the Evidence arising from *particular* Types and Prophecies, is now, by Length of Time, and Distance of Place, and Change of Customs, become obscure and difficult to the Generality of People, and cannot be thoroughly discuss'd without a great Variety of Knowledge concerning the ancient *Jewish* Customs, and the Authority of their Writings, and the exact Calculations of Time; All which require much Study, and leave Room to ill-minded Men to dispute and cavil, and to perplex Readers who are unacquainted with the Learning and History of former Ages: For these Reasons, the Promoters of Infidelity might well hope to find their Account in resting the *whole* Evidence of Christianity upon the Types and Prophecies of the Old Testament; partly to furnish wicked Minds with Objections, and fill weak Minds with Doubts; and partly to draw and divert Mankind from attending to the more *plain, strong, and direct* Evidences of the Truth of Christianity.

To avoid this Snare, fix your Mind stedfastly upon the Testimony of *Facts* which are undeniable, and upon *Consequences* flowing from them, which are plain and obvious to the meanest Capacities.

3. As to the *Facts* contain'd in the New Testament; they have the fullest Testimony, that any ancient History can have: 'They are transmitted to us by Persons who were Eye-witnesses of them, or at least Contemporary with those that were so, of whom they had diligently enquir'd. 'Persons, to whom no Fraud, Insincerity, or Immorality of any kind, was ever objected: 'So far

far from being suspected of *Design* or *Contrivance*, that they were despis'd both by *Jew* and *Gentile*, as simple and ignorant Men; 'Not mov'd by any Prospect of Riches, Honours, or other temporal Advantage, but on the contrary expos'd to continual Persecutions upon the single Account of their giving Testimony to those Facts; in which, notwithstanding, they persevered to the last, and were ready to seal the Truth of their Testimony with their Blood, as we are assur'd several of them did. Nor can there be the least Doubt, whether those were the very Persons who recorded the Facts as conveyed to us; since we find the Books by which they have been convey'd, expressly ascrib'd to them, and frequently cited under their Names, by the Writers of the very next Age, and of every Age since; and not only received as such by the several Christian Churches, but admitted both by *Jews* and *Heathens* in their Writings against Christianity. We also find, by the numerous Passages which they cite from them, and by the early Translations of the Books themselves into several Languages, that they are the same with those we now have; and are moreover assur'd, that the Original Writings of several of them were preserv'd for some Ages, and frequently appeal'd to by the Christians, in their Disputes with Hereticks. These are the known Evidences, to prove that any ancient Book, whether sacred or prophane, was really written by the Person whose Name it bears; and it appears by what has been said, that they may be applied with greater Strictness and Justice to the New Testament, than to any other ancient Writing whatsoever; particularly, in the Point of so many Persons laying down
their

their Lives, in Testimony of the Truth of the Doctrine and Facts contain'd in them.

4. As to the *Consequences* from those Facts, and the Application of them in order to satisfy yourselves concerning the Truth of Christianity; begin with the GENERAL EXPECTATION there was of a Messiah or great Prophet and Deliverer, about the Time that our Saviour came. And for the Proof of this, you need go no farther, than the Writings of the Evangelists: It is said of ¹ *Sim- meon*, a just and devout Man, *that he was waiting for the Consolation of Israel.* *Anna the Prophetess spake of Jesus to all them that look'd for Redemp- tion in Jerusalem.* Upon the appearing of ² *John* the Baptist, *the People were in Expectation, and all Men mused in their Hearts, whether he was the Christ, or not.* The Message from *John* to Christ was, ³ *Art thou he that should come?* The Question put to *John* by the Priests and Levites was, ⁴ *Art thou that Prophet?* *Andrew* tells his Brother, ⁵ *We have found the Messiah, i. e. the Christ.* The People, seeing the Miracle of the Loaves, say, ⁶ *This is of a Truth, that Prophet that should come into the World.* At another Time it is said by the People, ⁷ *Of a Truth, this is the Prophet: This is the Christ.* The Woman of Samaria said, ⁸ *I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ.* The People say, *Do the Rulers know indeed, that this is the very Christ?* The Jews come about Jesus, and ask him, ⁹ *How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the*

¹ Luke ii. 25, 38.

² Luke iii. 15.

³ Mat. xi.

^{3.} ⁴ John i. 21.

⁵ John i. 41.

⁶ John vi. 14.

⁷ John vii. 40, 41.

⁸ John iv. 25.

⁹ John x. 24.

Christ,

Christ, tell us plainly. Martha saith to Jesus, ¹ I believe that thou art Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the World. And the High-Priest adjures him to declare, ² Whether he was the Christ, the Son of God.

These are Facts, which plainly shew that there was among the *Jews* at that Time a general *Expectation* of a Messiah; and this Expectation could arise from nothing but a known and general Agreement among them, that *that* was the Time which their Prophets had fixed for his coming. And even the Evasion of the modern *Jews*, that *two* Messiahs were foretold, one *Suffering*, and the other *Triumphant*, is an Argument from the Mouth of an Adversary, that a *Messiah*, which was foretold by their Prophets, is already come; inasmuch, as they find it impossible to apply many Passages which their own Writers, before the Coming of Christ, expressly applied to the Messiah, to any Person but a Messiah in a low and suffering Condition.

5. But let your chief Regard and Attention be to the Testimony of MIRACLES; those mighty Works which were wrought by Christ and his Apostles. For this is in its Nature a more sure, plain, and easy Proof; which the meanest Capacities are capable of apprehending and entering into; and which therefore was evidently intended to be the principal Means of convincing all Mankind of the Truth of Christianity. To deny that our Saviour wrought many and great Miracles, on all Occasions, during the whole Course of his Ministry, before Multitudes of People, in the Pre-

¹ John xi. 27.

² Mat. xxvi. 63.

sence of Enemies as well as Friends, with a bare Word, and with real and permanent Effects, is to deny the Evidence of Sense, and to destroy at once the Truth of all History whatsoever: and in this Particular it is to deny that which the bitterest Enemies of Christianity of old had not the Hardness to deny. To say (as the *Jews* did) that those Miracles were wrought by the Assistance of Evil Spirits, is to fall into the Absurdities with which our Saviour justly charges them, viz. ‘ That Satan casts out Satan: ‘ That a Person, whose Life was most holy, and his Doctrine divine, pure, and heavenly, was all the while carrying on the Work of the Devil; and, ‘ That a Preacher of Righteousness, Justice, Mercy, Charity, Truth, Meekness, Patience and Peace, could be enabled to work Miracles by any Power, but what was Divine.

And therefore we find, that Christ himself often *appeals* to his *Works*, or the Miracles wrought by him, as full and convincing Testimonies of his coming from God. For Instance, It is said of *John* the Baptist, that he wrought no Miracles; upon which our Saviour argues thus with the *Jews*: ‘ *I have greater Witness than that of John; for the Works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same Works that I do, bear Witness of me that the Father hath sent me.* At another Time, when the *Jews* came about him and said, ‘ *How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly;* his Answer was, *I told you, and ye believed not; the Works that I do in my Father’s Name, they bear Witness of me; and*

¹ John v. 36.

² John x. 24, 25.

PASTORAL LETTER. 27

again to the same Effect, ¹ *If I do not the Works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, tho' ye believe not me, believe the Works; and in another Place, ² Believe me for the very Works Sake.* And a little before his Ascension, he tells his Disciples, ³ *Ye shall receive Power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be Witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the utmost Parts of the Earth.* Agreeably to which St. Mark tells us, ⁴ *that they went forth, and preached every where; the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with Signs following.* And it is said in the *Acts*, that the Lord gave Testimony unto the Word of his Grace, (*i. e.* the Gospel) and granted Signs and Wonders to be done by their Hands. The Miracles they were enabled to work, were the proper and standing Evidences of the Truth of their Doctrine.

Nor does Christ only appeal to his Works; and enable his Apostles to do Signs and Wonders in order to the Propagation of the Gospel; but he grounds the great Guilt of the Jews who rejected him, on their having seen his Works, and yet not been convinced by them: ⁵ *If I had not done among them the Works which none other Man did, they had not had Sin:* And elsewhere he upbraids the Cities wherein most of his ⁶ *mighty Works were done, because they repented not.* And the Apostle to the Hebrews reasons thus: ⁷ *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great Salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was*

¹ John x. 37, 38.

² John xiv. 11.

³ Acts i. 8.

⁴ Mark xvi. 20.

⁵ John xv. 24.

⁶ Mat. xi. 20.

⁷ Heb. ii. 3, 4.

confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them Witness, both with Signs and Wonders, and with divers Miracles and Gifts of the Holy Ghost? On the other Hand, we are told by St. ¹ John, that when Christ was in Jerusalem, at the Passover, many believed in his Name, when they saw the Miracles which he did. And Nicodemus, a Ruler of the Jews, addresses himself thus to Christ; ² We know that thou art a Teacher come from God; for no Man can do the Miracles that thou dost, except God be with him. Again, ³ Many of the People believed on him, and said, when Christ cometh will he do more Miracles than these which this Man hath done? And in another Place, the Multitude who were fed with the Loaves, when they had seen the Miracles which Jesus did, said, ⁴ This is of a Truth that Prophet which should come into the World. And when the Chief Priests and Pharisees had assembled a Council to consider what they should do, their Reasoning was this: ⁵ What do we? For this Man doth many Miracles? If we let him thus alone, all Men will believe on him. Upon which St. Peter might well say, ⁶ Ye Men of Israel, hear these Words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man approved of God among you, by Miracles, and Wonders, and Signs, which God did by him in the Midst of you, as ye yourselves also know.

These Appeals which our Saviour makes to his Miracles, together with the immediate Convictions wrought by them, are joint Testimonies of the Propriety and Efficacy of the Argument drawn

¹ John ii. 23.

² John iii. 2.

³ John vii. 31.

⁴ John vi. 14.

⁵ John xi. 47, 48.

⁶ Acts ii. 22.

from thence. And since Miracles could be no Testimony at all, if they were not *true* and *real*; those Appeals and Convictions are of themselves sufficient, to shew the Vanity and Wildness of a late Attempt, to prove that our Saviour's Miracles were merely *Allegorical*; in which it is hard to persuade one's self, that the Author, if in his right Mind, can be serious and in earnest. But since the Notion he has vented, is industriously made use of by Scepticks and Infidels, to stagger and perplex unwary and ignorant People, who easily see, that if Christ wrought no real Miracles, Christianity has no real Support; for their Sakes, and on no other Account, I will proceed to shew the Absurdity of that Notion; without any Design to convince the Author himself, who either is not in *earnest*, or not *capable* of Conviction.

What he undertakes to prove, is, That the Miracles of our Saviour, as we find them in the Evangelists, however related by them as *Historical Truths*, and without the least Intimation that they are not to be understood literally, were not real but merely *Allegorical*, and that they are to be interpreted, not in the literal but only Mystical Senses; which strange and Enthusiastical Scheme, he has pursued throughout, in a most profane and ludicrous Manner. His Pretence is, that the Fathers consider'd our Saviour's Miracles in the same Allegorical Way that he does; that is, as *merely* Allegorical, and exclusive of the Letter. An Assertion so notoriously false, that it requires the greatest Charity to think, that he himself did not know it to be so. Some of the Fathers indeed, in their Explications of Scripture to the

People, of which their Sermons in those Days chiefly consisted, being willing to use all Means, and to omit no Opportunities of exciting in them a Spirit of Piety and Devotion, did not confine themselves to the bare Letter, but endeavour'd upon the Foundation of the Letter to raise Spiritual Meanings, and to allegorise upon them by way of moral Application ; and this, not only upon the Miracles of our Saviour, but upon almost all the Historical Facts which are recorded either in the *Old* or *New Testament* ; and the same was also a received Method of Instruction among the *Jews*. But would he have us suppose that the Primitive Fathers intended to *deny* the *literal* Facts of our Saviour's Miracles, or to make them *merely Allegorical* ; when he has not produced any one Authority out of the Whole Body of the Fathers of the first three hundred Years after Christ, except *Origen*, that can be pretended to countenance his excluding the *literal Sense* ? He has indeed heaped together a Number of Quotations ; chiefly out of the Fathers and Writers of the fourth, fifth, and following Centuries ; but many of the Passages he quotes, either expressly affirm or evidently suppose the *literal* Truth of our Saviour's Miracles ; and others of them tell us, that we must not *rest* in the Letter, but endeavour to find out mystical and spiritual Meanings. Now as such Quotations are far from *denying* the Truth of our Saviour's Miracles, according to the Letter, they can be no Manner of Service to his Cause ; and therefore it is hard to say for what End he produced them, unless it was to amuse his *English* Readers with the Appearance of a great Variety of Authorities, which

which he must needs see were nothing to his Purpose.

And as to *Origen* himself; tho' he went further into the allegorical Way than any other, yet so far was he from not believing and allowing our Saviour's Miracles in the *literal* Sense, that in many Parts of his Book against *Celsus*, which consists not of popular Discourses, but of just and sober Reasonings, he directly argues from them in Defence of Christianity. ' In ¹ Answer to *Celsus*'s Boastings of the Precepts and Discipline of the *Greeks*, he urges, that Christianity has a more Divine Demonstration, which the Apostle calls the Demonstration of the Spirit, and of *Power*; and he explains *Power* to be the Miracles of Christ; which, says he, we believe to have been wrought, as from many other Arguments, so particularly from this, that the *Foot-steps* of the same Power do still appear. In several ² Places, he takes Notice of *Celsus*'s ascribing the Miracles of our Saviour to *Art Magick*; and having particularly mentioned the restoring of Lunaticks, casting out Devils, and curing Diseases, in the Name of Christ, he adds, that *Celsus* not being able to resist the Evidences arising from the wonderful Works wrought by him, of which those he named were a few out of many, ascribed them to *Art Magick*; and then he shews at large the Absurdity of that ³ Supposition. He takes ⁴ Notice, that both *Moses* and *Jesus* did wonderful Works, and such as exceeded Human Power, and then expostulates with the *Jews* for

¹ Lib. 1. p. 5. Edit. Spenc.
34, 53.

³ Lib. 1. p. 53.

² Lib. 1. p. 7, 30,
⁴ Lib. 1. p. 34.

believing the Things which *Moses* wrought though recorded singly by himself, and rejecting the Miracles of Christ, upon the Testimony of his Disciples ; while the Christians, as he adds, were the more ready to believe the Miracles of Christ, as recorded by his Disciples, on account of the Prophecy of *Moses* concerning him. He ¹ argues for the Reality of the Descent of the Holy Ghost upon our Saviour, from the *Miracles* which he wrought, and mentions the casting out Devils, and the curing Diseases, *in his own Time*, as one Argument of the Truth of those Miracles. In Proof that Jesus was the Son of God, he ² urges his Healing the Lame and the Blind, according to the Prophecy concerning him ; and then proceeds to shew the Reality of what the Evangelists relate concerning his raising Persons from the Dead, and why he raised no more ; and adds, that his Miracles were intended, not only to be *Figures* or *Symbols*, but also the Means of converting Multitudes to the Christian Faith ; thereby plainly acknowledging the *literal* as well as the *allegorical* Meaning. He ³ proves the Truth of Christ's Miracles, from others attempting to work the like ; and makes the same Difference between *their* Works and Christ's, that there was between the Miracles of *Moses* and the Magicians, and says, that a *Jew* who defends the Miracles of *Moses*, is as perverse as the *Egyptians* if he rejects those of Christ. — He ⁴ speaks of the Miracles of *Moses* and *Christ*, as converting whole Nations ; and observes, that Christ was to overthrow the

¹ Lib. 1. p. 34.
p. 91, 92.

² Lib. 2. p. 87, 88.

⁴ Lib. 2. p. 91, 92.

³ Lib. 2.

Customs, in which the People had been educated, and to deal with a Nation that had been taught to require *Signs* and *Wonders*; and therefore had at least as great Need to shew them in order to gain Belief, as *Moses*, who had not those Difficulties to overcome. — “ He ¹ says, that whoever should embrace the Christian Religion, was required by Christ and his Disciples, to believe his Divinity and *Miracles*. — “ ² He speaks of the wonderful Works of Christ, (howsoever disbelieved by *Celsus*) as the Effects of a Divine Power. And, as to the Apostles, he ³ shews how absurd it would have been in them to attempt the Introducing and Establishing a new Doctrine in the World, without the Help of Miracles.

Judge now, whether *Origen* ought to be produced as one who did not believe the Miracles of Christ, according to the *literal* Sense, and as *full* and *proper* Testimonies of the Truth of the Christian Religion; and let this Instance convince you, how unsafe it is to take the Opinion of the Fathers, or of any other Writers, from *particular* Passages and Expressions which may be pick'd out of them, without attending to the Occasions upon which they were written, or comparing them with the other Works of the same Authors. A Liberty which has been much used of late; and if allow'd, would put it in the Power of designing Men to make almost any Writer speak what Opinion they please.

At the same Time it must be own'd, that *Origen*, and some others, indulged themselves further

¹ Lib. 3. p. 128.

² Lib. 7. p. 368.

³ Lib. 1.

P. 30, 34.

in the Allegorical Way, than was consistent with sober Reasoning and sound Judgment ; for which, He ¹ in particular was greatly blamed, both in his own Time, and by many of the Fathers of the succeeding Ages. But their Intentions were certainly pious ; and it could not be imagined, that there ever would be such a Man in the World, who should make it a Question, Whether any Father believed the Facts *literally* understood, who in his Defence of the Christian Religion against *Jews* and *Heathens*, appealed to the Miracles of our Saviour in their *plain* and *literal* Sense, as the great Evidence of his being sent from God. And as they practised the Allegorical Method, not only in the Point of *Miracles*, but in almost all the Historical Parts of the Old and New Testament, they are as good Authorities for entirely destroying the whole Historical Truth of both, as that of Miracles.

Tho' therefore it were granted, that all the ancient Fathers of the Church had unanimously indulged themselves more or less in the Allegorical Meanings ; it would not at all help this Writer, unless he could make it clear, that they also deny'd the *literal* Meaning ; and to say that any one, who urged the Miracles of our Saviour as the great Vindication of Christianity, could at the same Time deny the *literal* Sense of them, is a flat Contradiction ; since, as I observed before, Miracles can be no Evidence at all in any other Meaning but the *literal*. Much less will he find any Thing in the Fathers to countenance that *ludicrous* and *blasphemous* Way, in which he has treated Christ and his Miracles.

¹ Huet, Origeniana, p. 170.

The Truth is, the Supposition of an Allegorical and Mystical Meaning, exclusive of the *Literal*, carries in it so many strange Absurdities, that nothing could lead any one into it, but either great Weakness of Understanding, or great Disorder of Mind, or very strong Prejudices against the Christian Religion. For Instance; ‘ That when Christ appealed to his Works, as he often did, to prove his Divine Mission, he meant only *allegorical* and not real Works; ‘ That when the People asked one another, whether the Messiah, *when he came, would do greater Works than these*, they did not mean real, but only *imaginary* Works; ‘ That when Christ had the Disciples of John the Baptist tell their Master, what Cures they had seen him work, in order to satisfy him that he was the Messiah, as working the same Cures which the Prophets had foretold the Messiah should work, neither the Prophets nor Christ meant *real* Cures; ‘ That the great Number of *Jews*, who were converted upon seeing Christ heal the Sick, and raise to Life those who had been Dead, did not see them first to be Sick or Dead, and then alive or whole again, and so had no real Ground for their Conversion: ‘ That when the Multitudes came to be heal’d, upon their having seen the miraculous Cures that Christ had wrought upon others, they had really seen *nothing* to induce and encourage them to come to him; ‘ That when the Leper came back to thank our Saviour, he was not really heal’d, but came to return Thanks for *Nothing*; ‘ That when the People were amazed to see the Miracles he did, they were amazed at *Nothing*; ‘ That when the *Jews* fear’d the Success of his Miracles, and call’d a Council to pre-

vent it, they were only afraid of Shadows, and consulted about *Nothing* ; ‘ That when they persecuted him, and sought to slay him, for healing a Lame Man on the Sabbath-Day, he had really wrought *no Cure* ; ‘ That when the People intended to make him a *King*, on Account of his extraordinary Works, they had seen no Works, but what any other Man might have done ; ‘ That when it was urged by the *Jews*, that he wrought Miracles by the Help of *Beelzebub*, any Thing could have driven them to that Shift, but that they knew the *Facts themselves* to be real and undeniable ; ‘ That when the People were fill’d with *Wonder* and *Amazement* at the Cure of the Lame Man, which was wrought by St. *Peter*, they did not see him leaping and walking, who before was laid daily at the Gate of the Temple to ask Alms ; and when the Council could say nothing against it, nor could deny that a *notable Miracle* had been done, no such Thing as a Miracle had been wrought, but both *Council* and *People* were deceived ; ‘ That when *Simon Magus* desired to purchase the Power of bestowing the Holy Ghost, he meant to purchase no Power but what he had before ; ‘ That when the People of *Lystra* accounted *Paul* and *Barnabas* to be Gods, they saw nothing in them more than common Men ; ‘ That when the People out of every Nation were fill’d with Wonder, to hear the Apostles speak every one in their own proper Language, there was really nothing to be wonder’d at ; ‘ That the Conversions made in all Nations by the Apostles, of great as well as small, learned as well as unlearned, were all made by them without giving a real Testimony of a Divine Mission ;

sion ; ‘ That when the Writers of the Church asserted the Truth of Christianity upon the Evidence of the Miracles wrought by our Saviour and his Apostles, the *Jews* and *Heathens*, against whom they wrote, if they could have call’d in Question the Reality of those Miracles, would not have fix’d their Foot there, but put themselves to the Difficulty of inventing *other* Causes than a *Divine* Power to which they might ascribe them : In a Word, ‘ That the whole History of the Old and New Testament, which is all equally capable of being run into Allegory and Mystery by Enthusiastical Heads, has no Meaning at all, but such as every one shall think fit to allegorise it into, by the mere Strength of Fancy and Imagination.

These are some of the shocking Absurdities, which attend that wild Imagination of Miracles wholly mystical and allegorical, and without a *literal* Meaning. And as to the *Blasphemous Manner* in which a late Writer has taken the Liberty to treat our Saviour’s Miracles, and the Author of them ; though I am far from contending, that the Grounds of the Christian Religion, and the Doctrines of it, may not be discuss’d at all Times, in a calm, decent, and serious Way, (on the contrary, I am very sure, that the more fully they are discuss’d, the more firmly they will stand,) yet I cannot but think it the Duty of the Civil Magistrate, at all Times, to take care that Religion be not treated either in a *ludicrous* or a *reproachful* Manner, and effectually to discourage such Books and Writings, as strike equally at the Foundation of all Religion, and of Truth, Virtue, Seriousness, and good Manners ; and by Consequence at the Foundation of Civil Society.

6. But

6. But to return. To the Miracles of our Saviour, we may well add, as further Testimonies of a Divine Power, his PREDICTIONS of many Events, which were afterwards punctually fulfilled; ' That he should suffer at ¹ *Jerusalem*; That there he shall be ² betray'd unto the Chief Priests, and unto the Scribes, who would condemn him to Death, and deliver him to the *Gentiles* to be mock'd and scourg'd; That ³ *Judas* was the Person who would betray him; That the other Disciples ⁴ would forsake him; That, particularly, ⁵ *Peter* would deny him thrice; That, as to the Manner of his Death, it should be ⁶ *Crucifixion*; and that he would rise again the Third Day. To which we may add his foretelling the Manner of St. *Peter's* Death, and that ⁷ St. *John* should live to see the Destruction of *Jerusalem*; together with the ⁸ Persecutions which should befall the Apostles after his Death, and the Mission of the ⁹ Holy Ghost to comfort and enlighten them, and to enable them effectually to preach and propagate the Gospel.

But most remarkable to this Purpose is his foretelling the Destruction of ¹⁰ *Jerusalem*, and of the whole *Jewish* Nation, with the several Circumstances of it; as, ' The Time of its coming, ' The destroying of the City, ' The demolishing of the Temple, ' The Judgments upon the Nation in general, ' And their final *Dispersion*: All which

¹ Luke xiii. 33, 34. Mat. xvi. 21. ² Mat. xx. 18.
³ Mat. xxvi. 25. ⁴ Mat. xxvi. 31. ⁵ Mat.
xxvi. 34. ⁶ Mat. xx. 19. ⁷ John xxi. 18, 22.
⁸ Mat. x. 17, 18, 19, 20. ⁹ Acts i. 8. ¹⁰ Luke
xxi. 12, 14.

were distinctly foretold by Christ; and are attested by *Josephus*, (an Historian of their own Nation, who lived at the Time) to have punctually come to pass, according to the Predictions.

As to the *Time*; our ¹ Saviour having enumerated the dismal Calamities that were coming upon the *Jews*, declares, ² *That that Generation should not pass, 'till all these Things were fulfilled*; and he supposes, that some at least of those to whom he spake when he enumerated the *Signs* of their coming, should be then alive, ³ *Ye, when ye shall see all these Things, know that it is near, even at the Doors*: and after his Resurrection, he intimates that ⁴ *St. John* should live to see those terrible Judgments, which in Scripture are express'd by his *Coming*, and which were all executed according to those Predictions, in less than forty Years from the Time they were denounced.

Next, The Destruction of *Jerusalem*, and the Circumstances of it, are thus foretold by our Saviour; ⁵ *Thine Enemies shall cast a Trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every Side, and shall lay thee even with the Ground, and thy Children within thee, and shall not leave in thee one Stone upon another.* — ⁶ *Then shall be great Tribulation, such as was not since the Beginning of the World to this Time, no, nor ever shall be.* All which was fulfilled, in ⁷ *Titus's* encompassing the City with a new Fortification rais'd by the Soldiers in three Days, so that none could

¹ Mat. xxiii. 34. Mark xiii. 9. ² Luke xxi. 32.
³ Mat. xxiv. 33. ⁴ John xxi. 22. ⁵ Luke xix.
 43, 44. ⁶ Mat. xxiv. 21. ⁷ *Josephus* of the Jewish
 Wars, l. 6. c. 13.

come out; upon which there ensued a most ¹ dreadful Famine, the ² Stores and Granaries having been burnt and consumed before, in the seditious Quarrels and Fightings among themselves under three several Factions endeavouring to devour one another. The City being taken, was ³ level'd with the Ground, as if it had never been inhabited; and what by Famine, by Fire, and Sword, and by their Slaughters of one another, ⁴ eleven hundred thousand *Jews* were destroy'd, besides ninety seven thousand who were taken Prisoners; the Nation at that Time being gather'd together at *Jerusalem*, to celebrate the Passover.

The particular Destruction of the *Temple* is thus foretold by our Saviour, ⁵ *There shall not be left here one Stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.* And ⁶ *Josephus* tells us, That *Titus* order'd the Soldiers to lay the *Temple*, as well as the City, even with the Ground; and another of their ⁷ Writers mentions the Fact of *Turnus Rufus's* digging the very Plot of Ground on which it stood with a Ploughshare.

The Judgments that would fall upon the Nation in general, are thus express'd by our Saviour: ⁸ *These be the Days of Vengeance. There shall be great Distress in the Land, and Wrath upon this People, and they shall fall by the Edge of the Sword.* Accordingly they were destroy'd, ⁹ to the Number of two hundred Thousand and upwards, in several

¹ C. 14. ² Jos. l. 6. c. 1. ³ Jos. l. 7. c. 18.
⁴ Jos. l. 7. c. 17. ⁵ Mat xxiv. 2. ⁶ Jos. l. 7.
c. 8. ⁷ Maimonides. ⁸ Luke xxi. 22, 23, 24.
⁹ See the Calculation in Archbishop Usher's Chronology.

Sieges, Battles, &c. in the Towns and Countries ; besides the grand Slaughter at *Jerusalem*.

The following *Captivity* and *Dispersion* of those who remain'd, was also foretold by our Saviour :
¹ *They shall be led away Captive into all Nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the Time of the Gentiles be fulfilled.* Accordingly ² *Josephus*, after he has describ'd the taking of *Jerusalem*, speaks of them as a People dispers'd over the Face of the Earth ; and ³ particularly tells us, that the most graceful of the Captives were reserv'd by *Titus* to be Part of his Triumph ; that, of the Remainder, those above seventeen Years of Age were sent into *Egypt* in Chains, to be employ'd in servile Offices ; and others of them were sent into several Provinces for the Use of the Theatres and publick Shows ; and that all under seventeen Years of Age were expos'd to Sale. And ever since, to this Day, they have been, and still continue, a People dispers'd and scatter'd among the Nations of the Earth, without either Temple, or City, or Government of their own.

These Particulars, concerning our Saviour's Death, and the State and Condition of his Disciples and of the *Jewish* Nations, consequent upon it, are Events which are foretold, and which we find to have punctually come to pass, partly from the Accounts of our own Scriptures, and partly from a *Jewish* Historian of undoubted Credit and Authority. And that his Predictions, when fulfill'd, were intended by him to be Proofs of his

¹ Luke xxi. 24.
¹ Joseph. l. 6. c. 17.

² Joseph. l. 7. c. 21.

³ Jo-

being the Messiah, we may gather from his own Declarations. Having told his Disciples that Judas should betray him; he presently adds, ¹ *Now I tell you before it come, that when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am He.* And after the Prediction of his Death, Resurrection, and Ascension, he says, ² *And now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye might believe, i. e.* says Dr. Hammond, *That your seeing my Prediction fulfilled, may convince you, that all which I have said to you is true, and so make you believe on me.* To the same Purpose is that which he subjoins to his Account of the Persecutions that would befall his Disciples after his Death, ³ *These things I have told you, that when the Time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them.*

7. From the Predictions of our Saviour, and the fulfilling of them, carry your Thoughts to the speedy and wonderful PROPAGATION of the GOSPEL; and there also you will see the clearest Evidences of a Divine Power: A few obscure and illiterate Men, without Art or Eloquence, making Head against the ancient Religions of Kingdoms and Countries, and all the While professing themselves to be the Messengers of one who had been despis'd, and ill-treated, and at last crucified in his own Country; and yet, under these Disadvantages, prevailing with Multitudes every where to be his Disciples, and to embrace his Religion; and this, notwithstanding the Contrariety of its Doctrines to the Lusts, Passions and Prejudices of Mankind,

¹ John xiii. 19. ² John xiv. 29. ³ John xvi.

and the fierce Opposition it met with from the Powers of the World, and the terrible Persecutions, which for some Time were almost the certain Portion of the Professors of it; without any Encouragement to undergo them, but what was *future and out of Sight*. In these Circumstances, nothing could lead them to *attempt* the Propagation of it, with any *Hope* of Success, but a Promise of Divine Assistance, and their firm Reliance upon it; nothing could have given them such Success, but a *divine Power* working with them; nor can any Thing account for so many Persons sealing the Doctrine with their Blood, in so many different Parts of the World, but an absolute Assurance of the Truth of what they taught, and a future Reward for their Labour and Sufferings.

They who require greater Testimonies of a Divine Mission and Power, than those I have mention'd under this Eighth General Head, are never to be satisfied. But, on the other Hand, when an honest and impartial Mind has satisfied itself, upon those Evidences, that our Saviour and his Apostles had a Divine Mission, and that they wrought many and great Miracles, and foretold Events by a Power and Inspiration evidently divine; it follows, that the Doctrines for the Propagating of which they were sent, and for the Confirmation of which, those extraordinary Powers and Gifts were bestow'd, must undoubtedly be true, as coming from God, and attested by him. Particularly, their Divine Mission and Power being first established, their express and repeated Declarations that *Jesus was the Messiah*, become to us a full and irresistible Proof of the Truth of it. And when a Question arises, whether or no this
or

or that Prophecy in the *Old Testament*, this or that Type in the *Jewish Law*, had a Reference to the Messiah who was to come, and were actually fulfill'd in Christ; it is easy to determine with yourselves, whether you ought to listen to Persons divinely inspir'd, who affirm they had a Reference to Christ, or to Persons who pretend to no such Inspiration, and would persuade you that they had not.

The Evidence arising from ancient Types and Prophecies has (as I told you before) been fully consider'd, and clear'd from the Cavils and Objections of Infidels, by several very *Learned Men*; it being the proper Province of such, to follow the Adversary through all the Intricacies of the *Jewish Learning*, and the contemporary Histories, Customs, and Modes of Speaking and Writing. But, as Persons who are unacquainted with these Things, and incapable of entering minutely into such Enquiries, may easily be misled and impos'd upon by artful and designing Men; so I have shewn you under this Head, that you need not enter into them, but may receive full and clear Satisfaction from Evidences much more plain and direct, which lie equally open to all Capacities, and are perfectly well calculated for the Conviction of all, if there be but an honest and unprejudic'd Mind. And whoever shall affirm, that these are not a full and sufficient Ground of Conviction, without a critical Enquiry into Types and Prophecies, must affirm at the same Time, that no Part of the Heathen World, who were all equally unacquainted with the *Jewish Dispensation*, could receive and embrace the Christian Faith upon a just and reasonable Foundation; and by

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by Consequence, that all who did receive and embrace it, however wise and learned in other Respects, (which was the known Character of many of them) were, in that Particular, *Fools* and *Idiots*: Or rather, he must affirm, that it is *impossible* for God to make any Revelation at all, that can rationally be believ'd.

But because Practice (as I have observ'd under the three first Heads) has so great an Influence upon Principle, and it is to little Purpose to convince the *Mind* of the Truth of the Christian Religion, unless the *Will* and *Affections* be preserv'd in a right Disposition, and carefully guarded as well against the many Allurements to Vice and Profaneness which we see in the World, as against the Arts and Endeavours of wicked Men to break down the *Fences* of Religion; I will add one general Direction, which being duly attended to, will be a constant *Guard* against all such Attempts and Allurements; and, by preserving your Hearts in a Christian Disposition, will at the same Time prepare them to continue stedfast in the Christian Faith.

IX. And the Rule is this, *That you be careful to preserve upon your Minds a serious Regard and Reverence to Things SACRED*; that is, to every Thing that bears a Relation to God and his Religion, particularly his *Word*, his *Name*, his *Day*, his *House* and *Ordinances*, and his *Ministers*. For these are visible Memorials of God upon Earth; and, as they are the standing Means of maintaining an Intercourse between God and Man, a serious Regard to *them* is a necessary Means of keeping the Mind up in an habitual Reverence of God,

God. On the contrary, there is not a more evident Testimony of a corrupt and deprav'd Disposition, than an irreverent Treatment of Things Sacred, a Contempt of any Thing that carries on it a Divine Impression, or an obstinate Neglect of any of those Ordinances which the Wisdom of God has appointed to support and preserve his Religion in the World. When therefore you hear any Person depreciating the publick Duties of Religion, and inveighing against Ordinances of all Kinds, and representing publick Assemblies, and regular Ministers for the Administration of those Ordinances to be useless, or at least unnecessary; you have great Reason to suspect, that their *final* Aim is, by bringing these into Disuse and Contempt, to banish Christianity out of the Nation. And by the same Rule, whoever is seriously concern'd to preserve our Religion, and to maintain the Honour of it, must take great Care to preserve in himself, and propagate in others, a constant and serious Regard to every Thing that bears a Relation to God, and to consider it as *Sacred* on that Account. Particularly,

I. As to the WORD of God; Whatever we find deliver'd by the Prophets in the *Old Testament*, or by Christ and his Apostles in the *New*, is always to be consider'd by us as a Message from God to Men; and whoever considers it as such cannot fail of paying it the highest Regard and Reverence; much less can he fail of expressing, on all Occasions, his Abhorrence of making it the Subject of Wit and Jestings, and of raising Mirth from unserious Allusions to the Language or Matter of it; which, however usual in loose Company, and among unthinking People, is a very great Degree of

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of Impiety and Profaneness. As the Scriptures contain the Will of God, they are certainly entitled to your most serious Regard; and the most proper Testimony of your Regard, is, to read them frequently and with Attention; to have Recourse to them as your great Rule of Duty, and the Treasure out of which Religious Knowledge of every Kind is to be mainly drawn. In them, you find a continued Mixture of Precepts, Promises and Threatnings; first, to shew you your Duty, and to remind you of it, and then to quicken and encourage you in the Performance of it. And together with these, you see the many Examples of pious and good Men, and the numerous Testimonies of God's Favour to the Righteous, and his Judgments upon the Wicked. In the same Sacred Books, you behold the various Dispensations of God in the successive Ages of the World, and the glorious Scenes of Providence, opening by Degrees, and succeeding one another in a regular Order, and at last centring in the Messiah. And, by observing the *several Ways* in which God has reveal'd himself to Mankind, you clearly see the Excellency of the Christian Revelation above all others, in the Purity it requires, and the Rewards it proposes. In these and the like Ways, do the Holy Scriptures at once delight and edify all those who attend to them, and are conversant with them, and who regard and reverence them as the Sacred Oracles of God.

2. In like Manner the NAME of God is to be esteemed Sacred, in order to preserve upon the Mind an habitual Honour and Reverence to God himself; by not using it otherwise than seriously, and not mixing it with our ordinary Conversation,
and

and much less prostituting it to Oaths, and Curses, and Imprecations. Such a profane Use of his Name, insensibly takes off the Veneration that is due to his Being; and by making him less and less fear'd, emboldens Men to be more and more wicked; and is accordingly seldom heard but in loose Company, and among Men of profligate Lives. Wherefore, be careful to abstain from a common and irreverent Use of that Sacred Name, and of all such Expressions as signify Things of a religious Nature, as our *Faith*, our *Salvation*, or the like; and not only to abstain from the undue Use of them yourselves, but likewise to take all proper Occasions to express your Dislike and Abhorrence of it in others, and especially in those who are placed under your more immediate Care.

3. The Lord's DAY is to be esteem'd Sacred, as being sanctified and set apart, for ceasing from our wordly Care and Labour, and meditating upon God, and paying that Honour and Adoration, which he requires of us, and which belongs to him, as the Creator, Preserver and Redeemer of Mankind. The devout and serious Observation of this Day, is one of the most effectual Means to keep alive Religion in the World, both in the outward Face of it, and in the Hearts and Lives of Christians; and nothing is more certain, than that it would quickly be lost and extinguish'd among the Generality of Mankind, if it were not kept alive by the Appointment of this Day, for reviving upon their Minds a Sense of God and their Duty. Wherefore let this be a Day not only of Rest from Labour, but also of Meditation upon God and heavenly Things; partly in a devout Attendance upon the publick Offices
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of Religion, and partly by allowing a reasonable Portion of the Day to the private Duties of reading the Holy Scripture, and other good Books, and instructing your Children and Servants, and examining your own Lives, and praying to God for a Supply of your own private Necessities, Spiritual and Temporal. I say a *reasonable* Portion of the Day, according to the *Condition* of particular Persons and Families. For they who on all *other* Days were confined to hard Labour, or are otherwise obliged to a close Attendance on their worldly Affairs, must be allow'd in some Measure to consider this as a Day of Ease and Relaxation from Thought and Labour, as well as a Day of Devotion ; provided it be in a Way that is innocent and inoffensive, and that the publick Offices of Religion be duly attended, and the Duties of a more private Nature be not neglected. But there are many others, whose Quality and Condition have freed them from the Necessity of a constant Attendance upon worldly Business, and to whom all other Days are equally Days of Ease and Diversion ; and from them it may well be expected, that they abstain from the Diversions on this Day, and employ it more strictly in the Duties of Religion ; for which indeed they have greater *Need* than others, to arm themselves against the manifold Temptations to which they are daily exposed by Ease and Plenty. And when they have better Opportunity, and greater Need, than the rest of Mankind, to give a strict Attendance to the Duties of Religion on this Day ; if they do it not, it is much to be fear'd, that they have a greater Relish for the Delights and Business of

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this World, than for Exercises of a Spiritual Nature.

4. Next to God's Day, his House is to be accounted *Sacred*, as it is a Place set apart for the Performance of Religious Offices, and for the publick Administration of Religious Ordinances, in which all Christians are bound to join. The Duty of *assembling* for the publick Worship of God, appears to be a necessary Part of the Christian Religion; as well from the first Institution of the Christian Church, as from the general Practice of Christians in all Ages, and all Countries. Our Saviour and his Apostles found the *Jewish* Worship, every Sabbath-day regularly settled in their Synagogues, and were so far from condemning those Assemblies, that they joined in them. After his Ascension, we read, that they who upon the Preaching of the Gospel had ¹ *received the Word*, continued stedfastly in the Apostles Doctrine and Fellowship, and in breaking of Bread, and in Prayers; and that they continued daily with one Accord in the Temple. The Christians in particular Cities and Countries, are every where in the *New Testament* styled Churches, which probably denotes an Assembly of Persons call'd together into one Body; and we find the Apostles ² ordaining Elders in the Churches planted by them; which Elders are spoken of as *Heads* of the several Churches, and *Rulers* in them; and one Part of the Office was, to ³ *labour in the Word and Doctrine*, to take heed to the Flock, and to feed the Church. At Antioch, where the Disciples were first called Chri-

¹ Acts ii. 42, 46. ² Acts xiv. 23. Tit. i. 5.
 Acts xi. 30. xx. 17, 28. xxi. 18. ³ 1 Tim. v. 17.
 stians,

tians, ¹ Paul and Barnabas assembled themselves with the Church a whole Year, and taught much People; and afterwards, we read of ² Prophets and Teachers in the Church *that was at Antioch*. In other Places of the *New Testament*, we find *the first Day of the Week* (the Day of our Saviour's Resurrection) spoken of as the ordinary Time of the Christian Assemblies; ³ Upon the first Day of the Week, *when the Disciples came together to break Bread, Paul preached unto them*. And the same ⁴ Apostle gives special Directions to the Christians at *Corinth*, as he had done before to the Churches of *Galatia*, *That upon the first Day of the Week every one should lay by him in Store as God had prosper'd him, that there might be no Gatherings when he came*. In his first ⁵ Epistle directed to the same Church, he lays down many Rules for holding their Assemblies in an *orderly Manner*: He first reproves them for their disorderly Celebration of the Feast of Charity, and the Lord's Supper, and tells them, 'That they *came together*, not for the better but for the worse, 'That when they *came together in the Church*, he heard there were Divisions among them, 'That their behaving themselves as if they were eating and drinking in their own Houses, was a *Despising of the Church of God*. After this, he proceeds to give them a particular Account of the Institution of the Lord's Supper, with the Direction of Christ to celebrate it in Remembrance of him; which he ⁶ elsewhere calls the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ; speaking

¹ Acts xi. 26.² Acts xiii. 1.³ Acts xx. 7.⁴ 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2.⁵ 1 Cor. xi.⁶ 1 Cor. x. 16, 17.

of it as a Symbol of Christian Union, or the Badge of their Relation to Christ and to one another; all which is necessarily supposed to be perform'd in publick Assemblies. In the same Epistle, (ch. xiv.) against speaking in an unknown Tongue, he says, (ver. 16.) *How shall he that occupieth the Room of the Unlearned say Amen, at thy giving of Thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest.* At the twenty-third and twenty-sixth Verses, he speaks of the Church being come together into one Place; and then gives farther Directions for their more orderly Behaviour in their Assemblies, because, as he adds at the thirty-third Verse, *God is not the Author of Confusion, but of Peace, as in all Churches of the Saints;* which in those Days was the common Name of Christians. At the thirty-fourth Verse, *The Women are enjoyn'd to keep Silence in the Churches;* and he concludes with this general Direction, *Let all Things be done decently and in Order.* In the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Christians are first exhorted ¹ *to hold fast the Profession of their Faith without wavering;* and then, *Not to forsake the assembling of themselves together, even in Times of Persecution.* And that they strictly conform'd to this Apostolical Rule, we have the Testimony of Pliny a Heathen Writer, who being Governor of a Roman Province about the Year of Christ 104, gave the Emperor an Account of what he had learn'd concerning the Christians, ² *That they used to meet together on a certain Day before Light, (for Fear of the Heathen Persecutors;) when they join'd in singing a Hymn to Christ, and enter'd*

¹ Heb. x. 23, 25.

² Plin. 10. Ep. 97.

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into a solemn Engagement *not to steal, nor rob, nor commit Adultery, nor defraud*; which plainly refers to the Celebration of the Eucharist. But *Justin Martyr*, an ancient Father, in his Apology for the Christians, about the Year of Christ 150, gives a more particular Account of their publick Worship; “That on the Day called *Sunday*, all the Christians in City and Country assembled in one Place; where the Writings of the *Apostles* and *Prophets* were read: That as soon as the Reader had made an End, there follow’d an *Exhortation to the People*; and after that, *Prayers*, and the *Holy Eucharist*; the Person who officiated, *praying*, and the People saying *Amen*.” To all which we may add, That from the Beginning of Christianity to this Time, no Instance can be given of any Country in which the Christian Religion has been planted, where there has not also been Prayer and Preaching, and Administration of Sacraments, in an open and publick Manner; though it is known to have been planted by *several Apostles* in *several Countries*.

And it is to be hoped, that there are none among us at this Day, who hold Religious Assemblies to be useless and unnecessary, except the open or secret Enemies of Christianity; who well know, how great a Means they are to preserve a Sense of God and Religion in the World, and to improve Men in the Graces and Virtues of the Christian Life. But if there be any, who otherwise bear no ill Will to the Christian Religion, and yet are of the Number of those who think

publick Prayer, Preaching, and other Ordinances, to be Things indifferent and unnecessary; it is, because they consider not the corrupt State of Human Nature, nor the common Condition of Human Life; how strongly some are inclined to the *Delights* of the World, and to what Degree others are swallow'd up in the *Cares* of it, how ignorant many are of their Duty, and how often it is seen, that they who know it, practise it no better than those who know it not; how little Disposition Men naturally have to Acts of Devotion, and how unmindful they are apt to be of a future State. Upon the Whole, what small Hope there is, that the Generality of Mankind would retain just Notions of God and Religion, if they were not frequently explained to them; or attend to their Duty, if it were not frequently inculcated upon them; or refrain from inordinate Enjoyments, if they were not frequently warn'd of the Danger of them; or be influenced by future Rewards and Punishments, if they were not frequently put in Mind of them; or lastly, that they would duly perform the Work of Devotion, if they were not call'd to it, and assisted in it, by publick Offices and Ministers appointed for that End, and at the same Time excited to Seriousness and Attention, by the Solemnity of the Work, and the Examples of their Fellow Christians. Which shews, on one hand, the Wisdom of God in providing those outward Means, to check and cure our inward Depravities; and, on the other hand, the Folly of those who in their Reasonings against instituted Rites and Ordinances of Religion, seem to forget the Blindness and Corruption of human Nature, or rather to suppose
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that Mankind are a Race of Angels wholly freed from the Power of Temptations, and carried, by their own Nature, with the greatest Readiness and Cheerfulness, into all the Acts of Adoration and Obedience.

Now, if publick Assemblies be necessary, the Appointment of Places for those Assemblies is also necessary; and as the Place becomes Sacred, by the Sacred Offices which are perform'd in it, so the true Way of expressing our Regard to the Place, is a devout and religious Attendance upon the Offices; to consider, that we go to the House of God, not for Fashion Sake, but for the Ends of Devotion and Spiritual Improvement; and accordingly to fix our Attention, and to join seriously and devoutly with the Congregation in the several Parts of Divine Service. On the contrary, a wilful Neglect of the Christian Assemblies, or a careless and irreverent Behaviour in them, is a Contempt and Profanation of the House of God, and savours of a Mind void of Religion.

5. As the House of God is Sacred, on account of the Religious Offices that are perform'd in it; so are the MINISTERS who perform those Offices, and who have received a regular Appointment to it, as far as they answer the Ends of such Appointment. By their Hands the Holy Ordinances of the Christian Religion are administred, by their Tongues the Word of God is explain'd and enforc'd, and by their Ministry many other Blessings and Benefits are derived to the People committed to their Care. And as to the Necessity of a regular Mission, without which no Person may minister publickly in Holy Things; this appears,

as well from the first Institution of a Christian Church, and from the constant Practice of it in all Ages, as from the endless Confusions that must unavoidably ensue, if every one might set up himself to be a publick Teacher, and intrude at Pleasure into the Ministerial Office. Whether therefore we regard the Nature and Original of their Office, or the Work they are employed about; they are to be consider'd as God's Ministers, and to be received and respected under that Character, unless they forfeit their Title to Respect, by living unsuitably to their Character. In which Case, I am very far from recommending them either to your Love or Esteem, since I know it is impossible for you to pay either; there being no Person so truly the Object of Abhorrence and Contempt, in the Sight of all good Men, as a Minister of the Gospel, who by his irregular Life renders himself unworthy of his Function and Character. But let me caution you against being drawn into a Dislike of the *Order* itself, as *unnecessary* and *useless*; for this will of Course draw you into a Disregard of the Ordinances of Christianity, or rather will abolish the Ordinances themselves; and accordingly it has been labour'd by the Promoters of Infidelity, as one effectual Expedient to banish the Face of Christianity from among us. Let me also caution you against censuring the whole *Body* of the Clergy for the Faults of a very few in Proportion out of so great a Number, and against charging that as Vice or Immorality, which may in Reality be no more than Indiscretion or Imprudence. In general, let me caution you against a *Delight* in censuring the Clergy, and a *Desire* to make them appear mean
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and contemptible in the Eyes of their People, by which you bring upon yourselves the great Guilt of disabling them to do Good in their several Stations ; and if you find any who are really immoral, and persevere in it, shew your Concern for the Honour of God and Religion, by taking proper Methods to bring them under the Censures of the Church, for the Reformation of them, and the Terror of others.

X. Above all Things, beware of falling into an Unconcernedness and Indifference, in the Point of Religion. When a Revelation is generally believed to come from God, and has been received and embraced as such by so many successive Ages and different Nations, and by Multitudes of Wise and Good Men in all those Ages and Nations. When it lays down Rules for our present State, which manifestly tend to Holiness, and Peace, and the Improvement and Perfection of human Nature, and proposes to Mankind a *future* State of Rewards or Punishments, both of them unspeakable and endless, according to their Obedience or Disobedience to the Precepts it lays down ; Certainly, such a Revelation demands the Regard and Attention of a Rational Creature, so far as soberly to consider it, and to enquire carefully into the Grounds of it, as a Matter in which he is nearly concern'd. Christianity requires no farther Favour, than a fair and impartial Enquiry into the Grounds and Doctrines of it ; and for Men, who live in a Country where it is publicly profess'd, and where they have all the proper and necessary Means of Information, not to attend to it at all, or to consider it with such Indifference

as if they thought themselves unconcern'd in it, is the highest Degree of Stupidity and Folly. Let me therefore beseech you, to think of Religion as a Matter of great Importance in itself, and of infinite Concern to every one of you; and not to suffer yourselves, either to be diverted by the Business or Pleasures of the World, from regarding it; or deluded by wicked Men into an Opinion, that it *deserves* not your Regard.

These, my Brethren, are the Rules and Directions which I would put into your Hands, and recommend to your serious and frequent Perusal; hoping, that by the Blessing of God they may contribute to your Establishment in the Christian Faith and Doctrine, against all Attempts of Atheistical and Wicked Men to seduce and corrupt you. And that, under the Influence of God's Holy Spirit, they may become effectual to that great End, is the earnest Prayer of

Your Faithful Friend and Pastor,

Edm'. London'.



The Bishop of *London's*
Second Pastoral Letter, &c.

Occasion'd by some late Writings, in which
it is asserted, "That REASON is a
sufficient Guide in Matters of Religion,
without the Help of REVELATION.



HE Arguments that have
been used to support the
Cause of Infidelity, may be
reduced to two general
Heads; one, That there is
not *sufficient Evidence* of the
Truth and Authority of the
Gospel - Revelation; the
other, That Reason being a
sufficient Guide in Matters of Religion, there was
no *Need* of such a Revelation. The Tendency of
the first is to persuade Men to *reject* the Gospel;
and the Tendency of the second, to satisfy them
that they may without Danger or Inconvenience
lay aside and *neglect* it; and where-ever *either* of
these Arguments prevails, the Work of Infidelity is
effectually carried on.

To prevent your being seduced or shaken by any Suggestion that the Evidences of the Truth and Authority of the Christian Revelation are not full and sufficient, I endeavour'd in my first Letter to bring those Evidences into as narrow a Compass as I could; that, having set them before you in one View, and in their united Strength, you might be able to judge for yourselves. And as a Chain of Evidences so plain and forcible, cannot fail to establish every unprejudiced Mind in a firm Belief that the Gospel-Revelation was from God; so, when that is once establish'd, no Suggestion either against the *Need* of such a Revelation, or against our *Obligation* to receive it, ought to make any Impression upon you; because, to suppose that God makes a Revelation which is *needless*, is a direct Impeachment of his *Wisdom*; and to affirm that we are not bound to attend to and receive it, when made, is no less an Impeachment of his *Authority*.

But since the Infidels of our Age are endeavouring to lead Men into a Disregard of all Revelation, by magnifying the Strength of Natural Reason, and recommending it as a full and sufficient Guide in Matters of Religion, and from thence infer, that the Means of Salvation directed by the Gospel, notwithstanding all the Evidences of their being God's own Appointment, are to be laid aside as Superstitions and human Inventions, and every Man is to have the Framing of his own Religion; Since also there is great Cause to apprehend, that many may give too favourable Entertainment to a Scheme which thus flatters the Pride of human Understanding, and which, by lessening or removing the Terrors of the Gospel,

Gospel, shakes off the Restraints that are most uneasy to the Corruptions of Nature : For these Reasons, it highly concerns those who have the Care of Souls, to guard them against such fatal Errors ; first, by convincing them of the Insufficiency of Natural Reason to be a Guide in Religion, and by Consequence of the Need of a Divine Revelation, and our Obligations to attend to it ; and then, by setting before them the peculiar Excellencies and Advantages of the *Christian* Revelation, and the great Sinfulness of *Rejecting* it. Of these, and some other Points which naturally fall in with them, I will endeavour to give you a full and clear View, under the following Heads.

- I. The true and proper Use of Reason, with regard to Revelation.
- II. The Insufficiency of Reason to be a Guide in Religion.
- III. The great Need, and Expedience of a Divine Revelation for that End.
- IV. The Obligation we are under to *Enquire* whether any Revelation has been made, and what Evidences there are of its coming from God.
- V. The Duty of Mankind to *Receive* for their Guide, whatever Revelation comes from God ; and to receive it *whole* and *entire*.
- VI. The peculiar Excellencies of the *Christian* Revelation.
- VII. The great Sinfulness and Danger of *Rejecting* this Revelation.

I. *Of the true and proper Use of Reason, with regard to Revelation.* Those among us, who have

have labour'd of late Years to set up Reason against Revelation, would make it pass for an establish'd Truth, that if you will embrace Revelation, you must of course quit your Reason; which, if it were true, would doubtless be a strong Prejudice against Revelation. But so far is this from being true, that it is universally acknowledged that Revelation itself is to stand or fall by the Test of Reason, or, in other Words, according as Reason finds the Evidences of its coming from God, to be or not to be sufficient and conclusive, and the Matter of it to contradict, or not contradict the natural Notions which Reason gives us of the Being and Attributes of God, and of the essential Differences between Good and Evil. And when Reason, upon an impartial Examination, finds the Evidences to be full and sufficient, it pronounces that the Revelation ought to be receiv'd, and as a necessary Consequence thereof, directs us to give up ourselves to the Guidance of it. But here Reason stops; not as *set aside* by Revelation, but as taking Revelation for its Guide, and not thinking itself at Liberty to call in Question the *Wisdom*, and *Expedience* of any Part, after it is satisfy'd that the Whole comes from God; any more than to object against it as containing some Things, the *Manner*, *End* and *Design* of which it cannot fully comprehend. These were the wise and pious Sentiments of an ingenious Writer of our own Time; 'I gratefully receive and rejoice in the Light of *Revelation*, which sets me at Rest in many Things, the Manner whereof my poor Reason can by no Means make out to me.

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And elsewhere, having laid it down for a general Maxim, ' That Reason must be our last Judge and Guide in every Thing; he immediately adds, ' I do not mean, that we must consult Reason, and examine whether a Proposition, reveal'd from God, can be made out by *Natural Principles*, and if it cannot, that then we may reject it. But consult it we must, and by it examine whether it be a Revelation from God, or no. And if Reason finds it to be reveal'd from God, Reason then declares for it, as much as for any other Truth, and makes it one of her *Dictates*. Which is in Effect what ² St. Peter means, when he commands Christians to *be always ready to give a Reason of the Hope that is in them*.

Agreeable to this, the Bounds of Reason and Faith are laid out by the same ³ Writer, as follows: ' *Reason*, (says he) as contradistinguish'd to ' *Faith*, I take to be the Discovery of the Certainty or Probability of such Propositions or Truths, which the Mind arrives at by *Deduction* made from Ideas which it has got by the Use of its *natural* Faculties, viz. by Sensation, or Reflection. *Faith*, on the other Side, is the Assent to any Proposition not thus made out by the Deductions of Reason, but upon the Credit of the Proposer, as coming from *God* in some extraordinary Way of Communication. — And again; ' ⁴ *Reason* is *natural Revelation*, whereby the eternal Father of Light, and Fountain of all Knowledge, communicates to Mankind that

¹ Lock, Vol. I. p. 334. ² 1 Pet. iii. 15. ³ Lock p. 326. ⁴ Lock, Vol. I. p. 331.

‘ Portion of Truth, which he has laid within
 ‘ the Reach of their natural Faculties; *Revela-*
 ‘ *tion* is natural Reason *Enlarged* by a new Sett of
 ‘ Discoveries communicated by God immediately,
 ‘ which Reason vouches the Truth of by the Tes-
 ‘ timony and Proof it gives, that they come from
 ‘ God. — And elsewhere, ‘ ¹ Thus far the Domi-
 ‘ nion of Faith reaches, and that without any Vi-
 ‘ olence or Hindrance to Reason; which is not
 ‘ injur’d or disturb’d, but assisted and improved,
 ‘ by *new Discoveries* of Truth, coming from the
 ‘ eternal Fountain of Knowledge.—And, ² What-
 ‘ soever is Divine Revelation, ought to over-rule
 ‘ all our Opinions, Prejudices, and Interests, and
 ‘ hath a Right to be received with *full Assent*. Such
 ‘ a Submission as this, of our Reason to Faith,
 ‘ takes not away the Land-marks of Knowledge:
 ‘ This shakes not the Foundations of Reason, but
 ‘ leaves us that Use of our Faculties, for which
 ‘ they were given.

So little did this acute Writer dream of the
 new Notions which have been since invented, to
 support the Cause of Infidelity, ‘ That God can-
 not, consistently with the *Immutability* of his Na-
 ture, make any *new Revelation* [tho’ to *mutable*
 Creatures] by Way of *Addition* to the original
 Law of Nature; ‘ That the making any such new
 Revelation would be to deal with his Creatures
 in an *arbitrary* Manner; ‘ That no Evidences
 from Miracles, or other external Testimonies,
 upon which any new Revelation claims to be re-
 ceived as coming from God, are to be at all re-
 garded; and, ‘ That the *Matter* of such a Re-

¹ Lock, Vol. I. p. 329.

² Ibid.

velation is not to be attended to by any Man, further than *He* sees the *Fitness* and *Wisdom* of it, and can suppose it to be Part of the original Law of Nature; that is, it is not to be regarded or attended to at all, as a *Revelation*.—But this, by the Way.

II. *Reason, of itself, is an insufficient Guide in Matters of Religion.* But before I proceed directly to the Proof of this, I must caution you against several fallacious Arguings upon this Point, by which you may otherwise be deceiv'd and impos'd on.

One is, the Arguing from the Powers of Reason in a State of *Innocence*, in which the Understanding is supposed to be clear and strong, and the Judgment unbiass'd and free from the Influences of inordinate Appetites and Inclinations; to the Powers and Abilities of Reason under the present *corrupt* State of human Nature: In which, we find by Experience how often we are deceiv'd, even in Things before our Eyes and the common Affairs of human Life; and more particularly, in the Case of Religion, how apt our Judgment would be to follow the Bent of our Passions and Appetites, and to model our Duty according to their Motions and Desires, if God had left this wholly to every one's Reason, and not given us a more plain and express Revelation of his Will, to *check* and *balance* that Influence which our Passions and Appetites are found to have over our Reason and Judgment.

Another fallacious Way of Arguing is, that as Reason is our Guide in the Affairs of this Life, it may also be our Guide in the Affairs of Religion,
and

and the Concerns of the next Life. Whereas in one, it has the Assistance of Sense, and Experience, and Observation, but in the other, it is left in great Measure to Conjecture and Speculation. Or if Reason were *equally capable* of making a Judgment upon Things of a temporal, and Things of a spiritual Nature; yet there will always be a very great Difference in the Degrees of *Attention* which the Generality of Men allow to Things Temporal and Things Spiritual, to Things Present and Things Future, to Things in View and Things out of Sight. So that it is usually seen, that the wiser Men are about the Things of this World, the less wise they are about the Things of the next; and as to the Sufficiency of Reason to be a *Guide* in Religion, it is much the same Thing with Regard to the Generality of the World, whether Reason be *Uncapable* of framing a compleat Rule of Life, or the Generality be hinder'd by Pleasures or by Attendance on their worldly Affairs, from *Employing* their Reason to frame it; which will always be the Case of the greatest Part of Mankind.

In the next Place therefore, it is very unfair in those who deny the Need and Expedience of a Divine Revelation, to argue in Favour of Reason, as if all Mankind were *Philosophers*, and every one had sufficient Capacity, Leisure and Inclination, to form a Scheme of Duties for the Direction of his own Life. For it is not enough to say, that there are learned Men in the World, who are *able* to form such Schemes; since, whatever their own Ability may be, they have no Right to *command* Assent and Obedience from others; nor can any one rationally receive and embrace their Schemes without

without following them through the Chain of Reasonings upon which they are built, and judging whether the Reasonings will support the Schemes; and further, (in case those learned Men *differ*,) without judging, which of them is in the Right, and which in the Wrong. A Task, that the Generality of Mankind are as unequal to, as they are to the framing the Schemes themselves. And the Difficulty is still greater, when we find the same Philosopher differing from himself; now advancing one Opinion, and then again leaning to another; at one Time *clear* and *positive*, at another Time *doubtful* and *wavering*, upon the very same Point; in which Case, his Opinion on either Side, can amount to no more in the Result, than to prove him a Guide very unfit for the People to follow.

No less unfair is it, to interpret the Zeal that is shewn for Reveal'd Religion, as a *Disregard* of Morality. This is so far from being true, that the Advocates of Revelation always consider the whole Body of the Moral Law, as an essential Part of the Christian Institution; which is so far from having abolished Morality, that it enjoins and enforces the Practice of it, upon higher Motives, for more noble Ends, and to greater Degrees of Perfection, than any Scheme of *mere* Morality ever did, as will be shewn more at large in this Letter. But at the same Time it is laid down by them as an undoubted Truth, 'That God has a Right to prescribe the Terms and Conditions upon which he will grant Pardon and Favour to Mankind, 'That he has fully and clearly declared in the Gospel, what those Terms and Conditions are, and, 'That therefore it is great Presumption and a vain Hope to expect
Pardon

Pardon and Salvation in any other Way. And to say, in this View, that the Precepts of Morality, as the Product of mere Natural Reason, are not a sufficient Guide to Salvation, cannot with any Justice be call'd a *Disregard* of Morality.

No more can the Reverence we pay to the Revelation of the Scriptures as a *Divine* Direction, be call'd a Disregard of *Philosophy* as the Product of *Natural* Reason. Persons of Leisure, Capacity and Attention, in any Age, might easily learn from Observation and Experience, that an immoderate Indulgence of the Appetites was hurtful to the Body and Estate, and a like Indulgence of the Passions equally prejudicial to the inward Peace of the Mind, and the outward Order and Regularity of the World. And while Mankind had no other Light, the Philosophers employed their Time worthily, in drawing such Rules from Reason and Experience, as being duly observ'd, might make the present Life more happy, or rather, what was the great End they aimed at, less miserable. But then, as their Notions concerning another Life were at best confused and imperfect, and mere Reason could not inform them, with any Certainty, that this Life, with whatever befalls us in it, is a State of *Trial* and *Probation* in order to another; they could not tell how to make the Pains, Miseries, and Misfortunes of this World turn to our Account; nor by Consequence could they lay a sure and solid Foundation of Ease and Comfort against all Events. The Considerations which Philosophy suggests, to support us under the Pressures and Calamities of Life, are such as these; ' That they are the common Portion of Mankind, ' That it is possible Time may alter Things

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Things for the better, ' That at worst Death will put an End to them, and, ' That Impatience in the mean Time will but increase them. The Rules of Revelation are, ' That whatever befalls us, is by the Appointment of a wise and good God, ' That he sees Afflictions necessary to wean us from the Love of this World, and to turn our Desires and Affections upon a much better, ' That he has promised either to deliver us from them, or support us under them, and by that has given us Ground for a full Trust and comfortable Hope in him; ' That our *Patience* under the afflicting Hand of God, is a fresh Endearment of us to him, and will be an Addition to our future Happiness, and, ' That in Point of Duration, the Sufferings of this Life are as nothing, when compared with an Eternity of Joy and Glory.

These, we say, are a much better Foundation of Ease and Comfort, than any Rules that the Philosophers either did or could lay down; but in saying this, we do not *condemn* the Rules of Philosophy upon that or other Points, nor discourage Persons of Leisure and Capacity from entertaining themselves with them, not only as an agreeable Diversion, but as an useful Exercise of the Mind; some Things in them being truly Great, and what we justly admire in *Heathens*, as tending to raise the Soul above the Pleasures and Enjoyments of Earth. But then we say, that the Study of those Writings is become useless and unnecessary to the Generality of People, since Revelation has furnish'd us with Rules and Precepts, both Moral and Divine, which are far more perfect in themselves, far more effectual for their several Ends, and establish'd by a far higher Authority, than

than any of the Rules and Sayings of the Philosophers can pretend to; and at the same Time are plain and clear to the meanest Capacities.

This points out to us another Advantage which the Enemies of Revelation very unduly take, to advance the Strength and Power of Natural Reason in Matters of Religion; and that is, the taking an Estimate of those Powers from Books upon the Subject of Morality, that have been written *since* the Christian Revelation was made; many of which are clear and uniform both in the Measures of Duty, and the Motives to the Performance of it. But this Clearness and Uniformity are really owing to the Light of Revelation, which has given us a far more exact Knowledge than we had before of the Nature and Attributes of God, from whence many of the Duties do immediately flow, and also a far greater Certainty of future Rewards and Punishments, as well as a clear Conviction of the Necessity of Sobriety, Temperance, and other moral Virtues, as Preparations for our Happiness in the next Life, by perfecting our Natures in order to it. And therefore to judge rightly how far Reason is able to be a Guide in Religion, we must form that Judgment upon the Writings of such of the ancient Philosophers, as appear not to have had any Knowledge either of the *Jewish* or the Christian Revelation; and then enquire, 'What Progress they were able to make in the Knowledge of Divine Matters, by the Strength of mere Natural Reason, 'To what Degrees of *Certainty* concerning those Matters it could and did carry them, 'What Agreement and Uniformity there was among them, in the main and fundamental Doctrines and Duties of Religion,

gion, 'What was the natural Tendency of their several Doctrines, in order to the promoting of Virtue and Goodness, and, 'What Influence they had in their several Ages and Countries, in rectifying the Principles and reforming the Practices of Mankind. For all which Purposes, it is but Justice to them to suppose, that they had *as* great Strength of Reason and Judgment, *as* sincere a Desire to find out the Truth, and *as* great Diligence in enquiring after it, *as* any of the Enemies of Revelation at this Day can pretend to. And if it shall appear, 'That they were utterly ignorant of many important Points in Religion, which Revelation has discovered to us, 'That their Knowledge of many others was dark, uncertain and imperfect, 'That the Differences among them, in Points of the greatest Weight and Moment, were endless and irreconcilable, 'That many of them taught Doctrines, which directly tend to promote Vice and Wickedness in the World, and, 'That in Fact the Influence they had in rectifying the Notions and reforming the Lives of Mankind, was inconsiderable; If, I say, these Things appear, they will amount to a full Proof, that Natural Reason, of itself, is not a sufficient Guide in Matters of Religion.

1. The ancient Philosophers were utterly ignorant of many important Points in Religion, which Revelation has discovered to us.

They were Strangers to the true Account of the Creation of the World, and the Original of Mankind, and to God's Administration of the World, and Intercourse with Mankind, in the most early Ages. One ¹ Sect of Philosophers held, that the

¹ Peripateticks.

World

World was *Eternal*, and † another, that it was made by *Chance*; and they who believed it had a Beginning in Time, knew not by what Steps, nor in what Manner it was rais'd into so much Beauty and Order; and so, for Want of a sure *historical* Knowledge concerning this Point, it became a fit Subject for the *Fancy* and *Imagination* of the Poets.

They were sensible of a great Degree of Corruption and Irregularity in the Nature of Man, but could not tell from what Cause it proceeded, nor in what State our first Parents came out of the Hands of God, nor by what Means they lost their original Perfection. And the Want of knowing these Things, leads Men of course into endless Perplexities, how to reconcile the Purity and Perfection of God the Creator, to the Uncleanneſs and Corruption of Man the Being created; and tempts them to suppose, either that the Nature of God is not pure, or that the Soul of Man is not of a Divine Original.

Much less could the Light of Nature acquaint them with the Method He has ordained and established for the Recovery of lost Man; † to effect a Reconciliation between God and Man, † to exercise his Goodness without the Violation of his Justice, † and not only to make the Pardon of Sinners consistent with the Wisdom of his Government, the Honour of his Laws, and his Hatred of Sin, so as to render their Salvation *possible*, but to give them the strongest *Assurances* of Pardon and Favour, upon the plain Conditions of Faith and Repentance. These are Things that

† Epicureans.

depend wholly upon Revelation ; and without the Knowledge of these, Mankind must remain in a perplexed and desponding State, as to the Pardon of Sin, and the Favour of God. The Comfort they would raise from the Mercy and Goodness of God is check'd by the Consideration of his Justice, and nothing is able to fix the guilty Mind in a State of solid and well-grounded Comfort, but an Assurance that the Divine Justice is satisfied, and an express Declaration on the Part of God, upon what Terms and Conditions he will receive the Sinner into Favour.

Then, as to the *Publick Worship* of God ; the Light of Nature might in general suggest to Men the *Reasonableness* of joining in Worship ; but in what Manner he would be worshipped, and in what Way they might perform a Service that would be acceptable to him, was understood to be a Point, which the Wit and Penetration of Man could not fix and determine. Infomuch, that the Founders of States and Kingdoms, who undertook to settle *Civil Administrations* by the Rules of human Prudence, found it necessary to ground their Schemes of *Religion* upon pretended Revelations, as the only Way to give *them* a proper Sanction, and the *People* an Assurance, that their Religious Performances would be accepted.

The Points of Knowledge, mentioned under this first Head, are evidently such as the Philosophers were wholly ignorant of, as not falling within the Compass of human Reason in its corrupt State ; and the Importance of them to the Comfort and Happiness of Mankind, shews the vast Advantage we receive from Revelation, 'in removing many Doubts and Difficulties which

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would

would otherwise arise concerning the Nature and Attributes of God, ' in shewing us the true State of our own Original and Condition, and ' in acquainting us in the clearest Manner, upon what Terms, and by what Services, we may be sure of his Favour and Acceptance. To all which we may add, as another Point above the Reach of human Reason, The comfortable Promise he has made us of *supernatural* Aid and Assistance in our sincere Endeavours to perform what he has reveal'd to be his Will, in order to render ourselves acceptable to him.

2. The Knowledge which the Philosophers had of several important Points of Religion, was *dark, imperfect* and *uncertain*. Many of them, and those of the greatest Note, laid it down for a general Maxim, ' That all Things were uncertain, ' That Truth lay buried in a deep Abyss, and, ' That the furthest that human Wit and Understanding could go in Search of it, was no more than Probability and Conjecture; and accordingly we find the Wisest among them plainly intimating the Need there was of a Divine Revelation, to give Mankind a full and certain Knowledge of their Duty. But supposing them to have been able to lay out all the Duties and Offices of Life in the clearest Manner; that which disabled them from *reforming* the World, and obliging Men to *attend* to their Duty, was the *Uncertainty* they were under about the great and only effectual Mo-

¹ Cic. Nat. Deor. l. 1. Acad. qu. l. 1. Vid. Minuc. Fel. p. 112. Laet. l. 3. c. 20. See under the 3d general Head.

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gives to it; the Immortality of the Soul, and a future Account.

¹ *Cicero* enumerating the Opinions of Philosophers upon this Head, not only asserts what every one knows to be true, that the whole Sect of *Epicureans* disbelieved the Soul's Immortality, but adds, That many of the most learned Philosophers were of the same Opinion; and he particularly mentions two of great Note among them; one, who in his Writings had avowedly argued against it, and another who had professedly written three Books to confute it. He tells us further, that though the *Stoicks* believed that the Soul remain'd after Death, *for some Time*, yet they did not believe it was immortal. And even *Socrates* and *Cicero*, who were peculiarly favourable to the Doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul, do yet discover some *Doubt* and *Uncertainty* about it.

² *Socrates*, a little before his Death, tells his Friends, 'He had good Hope of some Sort of Being, when this Life was at an End;' but after that, he speaks doubtfully, and says, 'Though he should be mistaken, he did at least gain thus much, That the Expectation of it made him less uneasy while he lived, and his Error would die with him;' and he ³ concludes, 'I am going out of the World, and you are to continue in it; which of us has the better Part, is a *Secret* to every one but God.'

And ⁴ *Cicero* speaking of the several Opinions concerning the Nature and Duration of the Soul,

¹ Cic. Tusc. q. l. 1. Apol. Socratis.

² Plato in Phæd.

³ In

⁴ Cic. Tusc. q. l. 1.

says, ' Which of these is true, God alone knows ;
 ' and which is most probable, a very great Ques-
 ' tion.' And he introduces one, complaining,
 ' That while he was reading the Arguments for
 ' the Immortality of the Soul, he thought him-
 ' self convinced ; but as soon as he laid aside the
 ' Book, and began to reason with himself, his
 ' Conviction was gone.' All which gave ¹ *Seneca*
 just Occasion to say, ' That Immortality, how-
 ever desirable, was rather *promised* than *proved*,
 by those great Men. And if the Philosophers
 doubted even of the *Existence* of the Soul after
 Death, much less could they pretend to know any
 Thing of the Resurrection of the Body, and a
 solemn Day of Judgment, and the Sentence that
 will be finally pronounced upon Good and Bad
 Men at that Day. So far from this, that the
 great Argument by which they prove that Death
 cannot properly speaking be call'd an Evil, is,
 ' That it either wholly extinguishes our Being, or
 at least leaves us such a Being as is not subject to
 Punishment or Misery in another State. And
² they eased the People of those Fears, by explo-
 ding the Notion of *Infernal Torments* prepared for
 the Wicked, as mere Dreams, and Fictions of the
 Poets.

This Uncertainty about those great and funda-
 mental Truths, was attended with fatal Effects
 both in *Principle* and *Practice* : In Principle it na-
 turally led Mankind to call in Question the Pro-
 vidence, Justice, and Goodness of God, when
 they observ'd the Prosperity of the Wicked, and

¹ Sen. Ep. 102. ² Plut. de Aud. Poet. Cic. Tusc.
 q. 1. 1. Sen. ad Marc. c. 19.

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the Calamities of the Righteous, without being sure that either of them should suffer or be rewarded in another State; or else to doubt, whether there really was any essential Difference between Virtue and Vice, and whether it did not depend wholly upon the Institution of Men. In *Practice*; Hope and Fear are the two Things which chiefly govern Mankind and influence them in their Actions; and they must of Course govern and influence more or less, in Proportion to the *Certainty* there is, that the Things fear'd and hop'd for are real, and the Rewards and Punishments assuredly to be expected. And as the corrupt Inclinations of human Nature will easily overcome any Fear, the Foundation of which is but doubtful, so those being let loose and freed from the Apprehension of a future Account, will of Course carry Men into all Manner of Wickedness. Nor is it sufficient to say, that they are under the Restraint of *human* Laws; since it is certain, that very great Degrees of Wickedness may both be harbour'd in the Heart, and carried into Execution, notwithstanding the utmost that human Authority can do to prevent it.

From hence it appears, how great a Blessing and Benefit it is to Mankind, that the Gospel-Revelation has given us a full Assurance of the Immortality of the Soul, and of Rewards and Punishments in another Life, according to our Behaviour in this; and not only so, but has very particularly acquainted us, 'Who shall be our Judge, 'What the Manner and Solemnity of the Judgment, 'What is to be the Rule of Judging, 'What the Sentence that will be pass'd both upon Good and Bad Men, and 'What will be the

State of each in Consequence thereof. The certain Expectation of these Things, enforced by the Assurance God has given us, that he takes Notice of all our Thoughts, Words, and Actions, in this Life, in order to that future Account, conduces greatly, or rather is of absolute Necessity, to secure the general Peace and Order of the World, as well as to preserve the Virtue and Innocence of particular Persons.

3. The Differences among the Philosophers in Points of the greatest Weight and Moment, were endless and irreconcilable. This is a Truth so well known, and so universally acknowledged, that those among us, who have the greatest Zeal for natural Reason as a sufficient Guide in Religion, will not deny the Fact. A lively Description of which, we find in an ancient ¹ Writer of the Church, 'Every Sect of them overthrows all others, in order to establish itself, and can allow none to be wise, because by that it would acknowledge itself to be foolish; and as it overthrows the rest, so is itself overthrown by the rest.' And elsewhere, ² 'To what End should we fight against those, who are *destroying* one another?' Nor can it be said, that these Differences were only about Matters of less Consequence; since it is notorious, that the most *important* Points in Religion were Subjects of the greatest Disputes. While some asserted the Being of a God, others openly denied it; and ³ others again ran into the Notion of a *Multiplicity* of Gods, Celestial, Aerial, Terrestrial, Infernal;

¹ Laet. l. 3. c. 4.
Deor. l. 1.

² — c. 28.

³ Cic. de Nat.

1 and as every Country had its peculiar Gods, so the Philosophers made it a general Rule, that every one should worship the Gods of his own Country. While some (as I have shewn) were willing to believe that the Soul was immortal, and that they should live in a future State; others affirm'd it to be mortal, and to die with the Body: While 2 some affirm'd, that Virtue and Vice, as founded in the Nature of Things, were eternal and unchangeable; it was the Doctrine of others, that nothing was Good or Evil, Just or Unjust, Right or Wrong, otherwise than as the Laws and Customs of particular Countries determin'd: While one 3 Sect affirm'd, that Virtue was the sole Good, and its own Reward; another 4 Sect rejecting that Notion in the Case of Virtue in *Distress*, made the good Things of this Life a *necessary* Ingredient of Happiness; and a 5 Third set up *Pleasures*, or at least Indolence and a Freedom from Pain, as the final Good that Men ought to propose to themselves; (upon which *Differences* 6 Tully very justly observes, 'That they who do not agree in stating what is the *chief* *End* or *Good*, must of Course differ in the *whole* *System* of Precepts for the Conduct of Life.') Again, While many of them thought it reasonable to believe, that the general Order and Government of the World could not be maintain'd without the Superintendence of some superior

1 Plato de Leg. l. 4. Epiet. Ench. c. 38. Cic. de Nat. Deor. l. 3. — de Leg. l. 2. 2 Diog. Laert. l. 2. p. 89, 134, 138. l. 9. p. 581. l. 10. p. 671. Max. Tyr. Diff. 1. Sem. Ep. l. 10. p. 97, 302. 3 Stoicks. 4 Aristotelians. 5 Epicureans. 6 Cic. Acad. qu. l. 1. — de Fin. l. 5.

Power; one whole ¹ Sect absolutely denied a Providence, ² others acknowledged no more than a ³ general Providence which did not respect particular Beings; others, who own'd a particular Providence, extended it only to ⁴ greater Matters, while the less, in their Opinion, were neglected; others again denied the ⁵ Omniscience of God, which was little less than the Denial of a Providence as to the Effects it ought to have upon the Behaviour of Mankind. And while some talked of their Gods taking *Vengeance* upon the Bad, and rewarding the Good, in order to deter Men from Wickedness, and excite them to Goodness; others exploded the Notion of the Gods being ⁶ *pleased* or *displeased* on any Account, and by that, entirely removed out of the Minds of Men the *Desire* of pleasing, and the *Fear* of displeasing them, and all Thoughts of praying to them or thanking them, for the Benefits they either wanted, or enjoyed. Upon which, it is justly observed by an ancient Christian ⁷ Writer, That if this Principle of God's being neither pleased nor displeased, were true, there must be an End of all Religion; since it leaves no Foundation either for *honouring* or *fearing* the Deity. And yet it is ⁸ said to have been the universal Opinion of Philosophers (not only of those who thought that God did not concern himself with human Affairs, but of those

¹ Epicureans. ² Aristotelians. ³ — Plut. de Pl. Phil. 1. 2. c. 3. Diog. Laert. 1. 5. — Arian. Epict. 1. 1. c. 12. ⁴ Cic. de Nat. Deor. 1. 2, & 3. ⁵ Cic. Nat. Deor. 1. 1. De Div. 1. 2. De Fato Min. Fel. p. 10. Var. ⁶ Laët. de Ira. Orig. contra Cels. 1. 4. ⁷ Laët. de Ira, c. 6. ⁸ Cic. Offic. 1. 3.

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who believed he did) that he was neither *angry* with Men, nor would *punish* them.

These and the other Differences among them, which would fill Volumes, are not mentioned as any Reproach to the Philosophers in Point of Ability and Understanding ; since it happen'd no otherwise to them, than it always will do to any Number of Men, who in this corrupt State of Things will depend upon themselves alone in Matters of Religion. But I mention them, to shew the Weakness and Folly of those, who, because the Philosophers now and then indulged themselves in Speculations of a Divine Nature, would send us to them for a *complete* and *uniform* Scheme of Religion ; who, from their having laid down many useful Rules, grounded upon the natural Connexion of Things as they appear in daily Experience and Observation, in order to the wise Conduct of human Affairs, and our Peace and Happiness in this Life, would infer, that they are therefore proper and sufficient Guides to our Happiness in the next ; and who, in Reality, under this Pretext, are doing all they can to gratify and encourage the voluptuous Part of Mankind, by discharging them from all Regard to the Laws of Christ, (which have the Sanction of Divine Authority, and against which there can be no Objection, but that they are too pure for Appetites so much viciated and depraved) and leaving them to form a Religion for themselves out of this or that Philosopher, whose Maxims and Doctrines they can best relish ; the Wisest of which, (how *sublime* soever some of the Thoughts may seem) were no more than the Imaginations and Conjectures of fallible Men.

But be their Schemes of Religion what they would, these two Things are certain; ' That no one Philosopher had more-Right than another, to impose his Scheme upon Mankind; and, ' That setting aside Revelation, no one Person at this Day has any Authority to determine, amidst so many different and contradictory Opinions, which of the Philosophers was in the Right, and which in the Wrong. Upon this Foot therefore the greatest Part of Mankind are left in a State of endless Perplexity, without Ability to determine for themselves, and without any certain Guide on whose Determination they may safely rely. And this made one of the best and wisest among them say, ' ' That Error was so mixed with Truth, ' and oft-times with such Likeness to each other, ' that there was no Way left to determine the ' Judgment; ' and ' ' That it would be Time ' enough to blame the *Sceptick* Philosophy which ' doubted of every Thing, when either the rest of ' the Philosophers were agreed, or some one should ' be found who could ascertain the Truth.' Which shews the great Advantage of a *Divine Revelation*, as well to ascertain our Duty, as to engage our Attention and Regard to it; to give all Men, great and small, learned and unlearned, a sure Rule, and a clear View of all they are to do, and effectually to engage them in a steady and uniform Pursuit of the great End that such a Revelation proposes.

By attending to the Matters wherein the Philosophers differ'd, we see clearly that they were Points which concern'd the very *Being* of Reli-

1 Cic. de Nat. Deor. l. 1.

2 Cic. Academicks.

gion and Virtue; and that those Differences render'd the Motives and Obligations to both, precarious and uncertain. And this shews how unjust the Objection is, which Infidels raise upon this Head, from the different Opinions among Christians, and the several Sects and Denominations form'd upon those Differences. As long as Men are Men, and have different Degrees of Understanding, and every one a Partiality to his own Conceptions; it is not to be expected, that they should agree in any one entire Scheme and every Part of it, in the Circumstances as well as the Substance, in the Manner of Things as well as in the Things themselves. The Question therefore is not in general about a Difference in Opinion, which in our present State is unavoidable; but about the Weight and Importance of the Things wherein Christians differ, and the Things wherein they agree. And it will appear, that the several Denominations of Christians agree both in the Substance of Religion, and in the necessary Enforcements of the Practice of it: 'That the World and all Things in it were created by God, and are under the Direction and Government of his all-powerful Hand and all-seeing Eye: 'That there is an essential Difference between Good and Evil, Virtue and Vice; 'That there will be a State of future Rewards and Punishments, according to our Behaviour in this Life; 'That Christ was a Teacher sent from God, and that his Apostles were divinely inspired; 'That all Christians are bound to *declare* and *profess* themselves to be his Disciples; 'That not only the Exercise of the several Virtues, but also a Belief in Christ, is necessary in order to their obtaining the Pardon:

of Sin, the Favour of God, and Eternal Life ;
' That the Worship of God is to be perform'd chiefly by the Heart, in Prayers, Praises and Thanksgivings ; and as to all other Points, ' That they are bound to live by the Rules which Christ and his Apostles have left them in the Holy Scriptures. Here then is a fixt, certain, and uniform Rule of Faith and Practice, containing all the most necessary Points of Religion, established by a Divine Sanction, embraced as such by all Denominations of Christians, and in itself abundantly sufficient to preserve the Knowledge and Practice of Religion in the World. As to Points of greater Intricacy, and which require uncommon Degrees of Penetration and Knowledge ; such indeed have been Subjects of Dispute among Persons of *Study* and *Learning* in the several Ages of the Christian Church ; but the *People* are not obliged to enter into them, so long as they do not touch the *Foundations* of Christianity, nor have an Influence upon *Practice*. In other Points, it is sufficient that they believe the Doctrines, so far as they find, upon due Enquiry and Examination according to their several Abilities and Opportunities, that God has revealed them. Now this is a State of Things very different from that of the Heathen World ; in which their Teachers differ'd about the most important Points in Religion ; and while no one could claim an Authority from God, nor any Right to require an Assent to his Doctrines ; the Generality of People had no certain Test to try them by, nor by Consequence any Means to deliver themselves out of a Maze of endless Doubt and Uncertainty. Which is well express'd

express'd by an ancient ¹Writer in Answer to the Question, Did the Philosophers then teach nothing that was right? 'Yes, says he, many Things; but 'their Precepts have no *Weight*, because they are 'human, and want a Divine Sanction.' They are not believ'd, because 'he who hears, thinks himself 'a Man, as well as he who teaches.

4. The Philosophers taught Doctrines, which directly tend to encourage Vice and Wickedness in the World. Of this Sort, were the Notions already mentioned, concerning Providence, and the Omniscience and Omnipresence of God, and their denying that he was either pleas'd or displeas'd with Mankind, and their resolving the Distinctions between Good and Evil into human Authority and Appointment. Such also was the Doctrine of *Fate*, or Men's doing every Thing through *Necessity*, and not by *Choice*; which takes away all Virtue and Vice, and leaves no Place for Rewards or Punishments either here or hereafter; and yet this was the avowed Doctrine of one famous ²Sect among them. And the Prevalency of this Doctrine of Fate in the Heathen World, together with the pernicious Influence it naturally has upon Virtue and Religion, was the Reason why the ancient Fathers of the Christian Church took so much Pains in their several Writings to confute and expose it.

Nor did they only hold *Principles* destructive of Virtue, but also maintain'd ³*Practices* of a very vile and corrupt Nature. *Plato* taught the Expedience and Lawfulness of ⁴*Exposing Children* in

¹ Lact. l. 3. c. 27.

² Stoicks.

³ Plat. de Rep.

l. 5.

⁴ Casting out to perish.

particular Cases, and ¹ *Aristotle* also of *Abortion*. At *Athens*, the great Seat and Nursery of Philosophers, it was laid down for a Rule, ² That Infants, which appear'd to be maim'd, should either be kill'd or expos'd; and, ³ That the *Athenians* might lawfully invade and enslave any People, who in their Opinion were fit to be made Slaves. ⁴ Many of the Philosophers maintained the Lawfulness of Self-Murder. ⁵ Not only the *Epicureans* and others, but even *Plato* himself allow'd Fornication, and which is more shocking, a Community of Wives; and the most famous among them were known not only to approve but practise ⁶ unnatural Lust. To which we may add the *Cynicks*, who laying aside the natural Restraints of Shame and Modesty, committed the Acts of Lust like brute Beasts, *openly*, and *in the Sight of the Sun*; and the *Stoicks*, who held that no ⁷ Words or Speech of any Kind ought to be avoided or censured, as *filthy* and *obscene*.

These are Principles and Doctrines, by which many of the Philosophers, and those of greatest Note, let Men loose from the Obligations of Duty, and gave them full Liberty to indulge their brutal Appetites, and degrade human Nature into that of Beasts, while they were filling their Heads with fine Notions and exalted Speculations. And as these Indulgences, so agreeable to the

¹ *Arist.* Po. l. 7. c. 16.

² *Ibid.* l. 7. c. 17.

³ — *Ibid.* l. 2. c. 14.

⁴ *Arist.* Pol. l. 7. c. 16. *Cic.*

Fin. l. 1. *Sen.* Ep. 12, 28, 58, 70.

⁵ *Cic.* pro

Cælio *Plat.* *Conviv.* — *de Leg.* l. 8. *Athen.* l. 13.

⁶ *Athen.* l. 13. *Lucian.* *de Amore.* *Plutarch.* *de Lib.*

Educ. *Cic.* *Tusc.* q. l. 4.

⁷ *Cic.* Ep. l. 9.

Corruptions of Nature, plainly account for that Zeal which is shewn for Reason and Philosophy as our best Guides in Religion; so the great Objection against the Gospel Revelation is, that it expressly forbids Uncleanneſs of all Kinds, whether in Thought or Deed, as that which above all other Things poisons and corrupts the Soul, and makes it utterly unfit for the ſpiritual Joys and Delights of the next World; for which the pure Precepts of the Gospel, and the daily Practice of them, are deſigned to prepare us.

5. In Fact, the Influence which the ancient Philoſophers had in reforming Mankind, was inconfiderable. *Idolatry* was univerſally practiſed throughout the Heathen World, and the Worſhip of their Gods conſiſted of the moſt filthy, abſurd, and abominable Rites: ¹ Strumpets running up and down the Streets naked, with obſcene Speeches and wanton Geſtures: ² Men inflaming themſelves with Wine, and after that in the Dark ſatisfying their Luſt promiſcuouſly among a Number of Women: Temples erected to a ³ Goddeſs as the Patroness of Luſt, and ſhe miniſtered unto by lewd Women, who prostituted themſelves before her, and dedicated their Gain to her; with other Inſtances of Obſcenity, too groſs to be mention'd, and yet avowedly made a Part of their Religious Rites. And it is not to be wonder'd, that *Uncleanneſs* of almoſt every Kind was freely and openly practiſed among them, when their Worſhip conſiſted of it, and their ⁴ Philoſophers taught it both by their Doctrine and their Practice. The Obla-

¹ Floralia.
before, p. 85.

² Bacchanalia.

³ Venus.

⁴ See

tion of *Human Sacrifices* to their Gods was frequently practised; nor was their own *Offspring* spared upon some Occasions. Nothing could be more cruel and barbarous, than to take Pleasure in seeing Men murder and destroy one another, which yet was avowedly practised in their publick Shews, and Persons were *train'd up* to that inhuman Exercise, and permitted to hire themselves out to the Work; and it is affirm'd¹ by one who wrote an entire Discourse upon the Subject, that even War itself did not occasion so great a Destruction of Mens Lives, as those Shews which they instituted for publick Diversion. Nor, in private Life, can we reasonably hope or expect to find among them the great Virtues of Love, Meekness and Forgiveness, when we find² *Socrates* declaring it neither unjust nor revengeful, to rejoice in the Calamities of our Enemies; and³ *Cicero* expressly approving and professing *Revenge*; and⁴ *Aristotle* speaking of Meekness, not only as a Defect of the Mind, and as carrying in it too great a Disposition to forgive, but calling the patient enduring of Reproach, the Spirit of a *Slave*.

When our Saviour came into the World, and for some Time before, human Knowledge of all Kinds, and particularly the Study of Philosophy, was cultivated and improved in the *Roman Empire*, with the greatest Application, and by the ablest Hands. But how little Effect either theirs or the Writings of the *Greek Philosophers* had upon the Generality of Mankind, may be learnt from St.

¹ Lipfii Saturn. l. 1. c. 12.

² Plato, Phileb.

³ Cic. de Offic. l. 3. Tusc. q. 1. 3. Ep. ad Attic. l. 9.

⁴ Arist. Eth. l. 4. c. 11.

Paul's Account of the State of the Heathen World, and the Cautions he gives the Christian Converts against their wicked and abominable Practices. ¹ *This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the Vanities of their Mind; Having the Understanding darkned, being alienated from the Life of God, through the Ignorance that is in them, because of the Blindness of their Hearts; Who being past Feeling, have given themselves over unto Lustiviousness, to work all Uncleannefs with Greediness.* And again, ² *Have no Fellowship with the unfruitful Works of Darkness, but rather reprove them; For it is a Shame even to speak of those Things which are done of them in secret, i. e. in the Celebration of their* ³ *Rites and Mysteries, which was accompanied with all Manner of Lewdness.* And in his Epistle to the ⁴ *Colossians, Mortify therefore your Members which are upon Earth, Fornication, Uncleannefs, inordinate Affection, evil Concupiscence, and Covetousness which is Idolatry; for which Things Sake the Wrath of God cometh upon the Children of Disobedience; in the which ye also walked some Time when ye liv'd in them.* Agreeably to this, ⁵ *St. John* tells us, that except the Professors of Christianity, *the whole World lay in Wickedness,* and ⁶ *St. Paul,* speaking of the Gentile World in general as living under the Law of Nature, and having mentioned *unnatural Lust,* as common among them, goes on and tells us, *That they were fill'd with Unrighteousness, Fornication,*

¹ Ephes. iv. 17, 18, 19.

² Ephes. v. 11, 12.

³ See p. 87. ⁴ Col. iii. 5, 6, 7. ⁵ 1 John v. 19.

⁶ Rom. i. 26, 27, 29, 30, 31.

Wickedness,

Wickedness, Covetousness, Maliciousness; full of Envy, Murder, Debate, Deceit, Malignity, Whisperers, Backbiters, Haters of God, Despiteful, Proud, Boasters, Inventors of evil Things, disobedient to Parents, without Understanding, Covenant Breakers, without natural Affection, implacable, unmerciful. ¹ St. Peter also exhorting the Gentiles who had been converted to Christianity, to live as became their new Profession, tells them, that *the Time past of their Life may suffice them to have wrought the Will of the Gentiles, in which they walked in Lasciviousness, Lusts, Excess of Wine, Revellings, Banquettings, and abominable Idolatries.*

And, in Truth, between the Corruptions of human Nature, and the Inability of the Philosophers to reform them, we are not to wonder that the Heathen World had grown by Degrees to such a Pitch of Wickedness. ‘The Philosophers in the several Ages were but few; ‘The Numbers who repaired to them for Instruction, were small in Comparison, and their Instructions confined to their own Scholars, who were usually Persons only of Fortune and Distinction; ‘The Generality of the People had no Opportunity to be instructed by them, nor if they had, were they able to understand and enter into the many dark and abstruse Notions of their Instructors; ‘The publick Rites of Worship, which the People did attend, consisted wholly of the Ceremonies performed by their Priests, without any moral Instructions or Lessons of Duty; Though the Philosophers had been more clear, few of them had *Schemes* of Religion and Duty, or any more than scatter’d Notions of Morality, ad-

ded to some private and singular Tenets to distinguish them from other Sects: ' Though they had given Schemes entire and uniform, they had not sufficient Authority either to command Attention, or require Obedience; ' Or whatever Authority any one had, it was greatly diminish'd by the endless Disputes among the Philosophers themselves; ' And though they had been qualified to teach in all other Respects, little Fruit was to be expected from *Teaching*, where it was not accompanied with good *Living*. Which last Defect is noted by *Tully* in this remarkable Passage; ' Scarce any of the Philosophers, says ¹ he, are form'd in Mind and Manners, according to the Dictates of Reason: Scarce any, who do not make their Institutions rather an Ostentation of Knowledge, than a Rule of Life; Scarce any, who obey themselves, and are govern'd by their own Precepts.' And so ² *Aristotle*, long before, represented the Scholars of the Philosophers, ' As learning to *wrangle* rather than to live, and being no more better'd by the moral Lessons of their Master, than Sick-Men would be by the Discourses of their Physician without taking his Prescriptions.' To the same Purpose, ³ *Quintilian* speaks of the Philosophers of his own Time, ' That the most notorious Vices were screen'd under that Name; and that they did not labour to maintain the Character of Philosophers by Virtue and Study, but conceal'd very vicious Lives under an austere Look, and a different Habit from the rest of the World.

¹ Cic. Tusc. qu. l. 2.

² Arist. Eth. l. 2. c. 3.

³ Quintil. Inst. l. 1. Præf.

But there is yet another Way of judging what the State of Religion in any Country is like to be, where natural Reason is their only Guide; and that is, from the Notions and Practices that have been found among People who were unknown to the Ancients, by the later Discoverers of Countries, and by others who have travelled into those Countries. A Collection of that Sort has been lately made out of Books of Travels and other authentick Accounts, by a faithful and judicious ¹ Hand; and to let you see more clearly and at one View how absurd and abominable they were, I have here reduc'd them to their several Heads, of *Worship*, *Doctrine* and *Practice*.

As to their WORSHIP; it may be truly said in general, that *Idolatry* has been found in almost every Country that has been discover'd, and, in many of them, Rites of Worship very wicked and abominable. In ² some, they were perform'd by *Women*, who in performing them laid aside all natural Shame and Modesty; and in ³ others, *Women* prostituted themselves for the Maintenance of their Idol, and in Honour of it. In ⁴ some Places, the People cut off Pieces of their own Flesh and threw them to their Idol, and in ⁵ many others they were found to offer *human* Sacrifices, and vast Numbers of them at a Time. The Objects of

¹ Millar, Propagation of Christianity, c. 7. ² Formosa, and the Philippine Islands. ³ Bisnagar and Nasinga in the East Indies. — Camdu, in Tartary. ⁴ Bisnagar and Nasinga. ⁵ Ceylon, Mexico, Peru, Terraferma, Virginia.

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their Worship were the ¹ Sun, Moon and Stars, the four ² Elements, the ³ several Quarters of the Earth, ⁴ Apes, ⁵ Elephants, ⁶ Serpents, Vipers, Dragons, Tygers, Herbs, Trees, ⁷ Birds, Fishes, Mountains; and in many Places ⁸ Evil Spirits. And, together with their Idolatrous Worship, ⁹ Sorcery, Divination, and Magick, were found to be common among them.

Among their DOCTRINES, and Heads of Belief, were found these that follow. ¹⁰ Two Gods, one of Heaven, the other of Earth; ¹¹ Two Sorts of Gods, Dæmons to be fear'd, and Conquerors and Benefactors to be honour'd; ¹² Several Gods presiding over several Quarters of the Earth; ¹³ One God above the rest, becoming so, by first passing through a Multitude of Bodies; ¹⁴ Gods subject to various Changes, and limited to certain Times of Government; ¹⁵ Providence concerning itself only about the great Affairs of the World; ¹⁶ The Transmigration of human Souls into the Bodies of Beasts; ¹⁷ Pagods eating

¹ Tartary, Philippine Islands, Guinea: Aufico and Jagos and Monomotapa, (all in Africa) Zocotara, an Island near Africa, Chili, Peru, Terrafirma, Canada, Florida, Hispaniola, Virginia. ² Ceylon. ³ Tonquin, in the East-Indies. ⁴ Goa. ⁵ Ceylon. ⁶ Congo and Angola in Africa. ⁷ Guinea. ⁸ Ceylon, Java, Philippine Islands, Æthiopia, Virginia. ⁹ Tartary, China, Terrafirma, Brasil, Canada, Granada, Hispaniola, Florida, Virginia, New England. ¹⁰ Tartary. ¹¹ Japan. ¹² Formosa. ¹³ Siam. ¹⁴ Malabar. ¹⁵ Malabar, Ceylon, Japan, Florida. ¹⁶ Indians, Tartars, Florida. ¹⁷ The Bramins.

and

and drinking like Men ; ¹ The Souls of Men, after Death, needing Meat and Drink, and other Accommodations of this Life.

Many PRACTICES have been found among them, that are abominable ; ² Women burning themselves with their Husbands, when dead ; ³ The chief Servants of a Prince kill'd at his Death, to attend him in another World ; ⁴ Eating Men's Flesh, and Shambles for selling it ; ⁵ Sucking up the Blood of wounded and dying Persons ; ⁶ Feasting upon the Bodies of their Captives ; ⁷ Having a Number of Wives and Concubines, and putting away Wives at Pleasure ; ⁸ Exposing and killing their Children, if born under an unhappy Planet, or ⁹ born before the Mother was of such an Age, or ¹⁰ if the Parents found themselves over-charged ¹¹.

These, and the like Instances of Corruption in Worship, Doctrine, and Practice, which have prevail'd, and do still prevail, in several Parts of the Heathen World, may further shew the Insufficiency of *Natural Reason* to be a Guide in Religion, and into what monstrous Opinions and Practices whole Nations may be led, where that is their Guide, without any Help from Revelation. Nor will it take off the Force of this Argument, to say, that these were owing to an *undue Use* of their Reason,

¹ Tartary, Guinea, Terrafirma, Canada. ² East-Indies, Guinea. ³ Guinea, Terrafirma. ⁴ Jagos (in Africa) Brazil, Hispaniola. ⁵ Tartary. ⁶ Canada. ⁷ Almost every where in Pagan Countries. ⁸ Ceylon. ⁹ Formosa. ¹⁰ China. ¹¹ More Instances of the like Kind may be seen in Mr. Lock's Essay, l. 1. c. 3. S. 9.

which

which is in Effect to beg the Question ; or that the Measure of Reason they had was low and imperfect, since they appear'd to be skilful and dextrous enough in Worldly Matters, in the Arts of annoying their Neighbours, and defending themselves against Incurfions, in entring into Leagues for their mutual Defence, and conducting the ordinary Affairs of Life according to the Manners and Customs of their feveral Countries. Nor are the Absurdities in Religion which have been found among *them*, greater than thofe that have been found among the moft polite Nations before the Publication of the Gospel ; which are a joint Proof, that no Age or Country, be it rude or civiliz'd, instructed or uninstructed in Arts and Sciences, infected or uninfected with Plenty and Luxury, is secur'd by mere natural Reason againft falling into the groffeft Errors and Corruptions in Religion.

Hitherto, you have feen the pernicious Errors and wicked Practices into which the World has fall'n both in ancient and later Days, notwithstanding the Light of Natural Reason, and the Lessons of Philofophers. But as the Chriftian Inftitution in its *Nature* and *Tendency* is far better calculated for the Reformation of Mankind, than any Teaching or Difcipline the World had in the Days of Heathenifm ; fo in Fact it has had a far greater Effect in the Advancement of true Religion, and the Reformation of the Lives and Manners of Men. Not to infift upon the exalted Degrees of Purity and Perfection to which Chriftianity rais'd fo many of its firft Profeflors, ' their Con-

• See before, p. 87.

tempt of the World, ' their wonderful Courage and Patience under Persecution, ' their Mortifications and Self-Denials, ' their fervent Love and Charity and Devotion, ' not, I say, to insist upon these, tho' the true and genuine Effects of Christianity; because it may be said, they were Effects of an *extraordinary* Kind, and wrought only upon *particular* Persons; let us take a View of it; not as it was embrac'd by single Persons or Families, but as it became the receiv'd Religion of whole Countries, and see what Effects it had among them. And it is universally true, that wherever Christianity prevail'd, Oracles ceas'd, Idols were destroy'd, and the Worship of the true God establish'd. And whereas the Heathen Worship, as we have seen, consisted of the Sacrifices of Beasts and Men, and was accompanied with many foolish, cruel, and impure Rites, Christianity banish'd all these, and wherever it was receiv'd, did establish a Worship suitable to the pure and spiritual Nature of God, a Worship of the Heart, consisting of Prayers, and Praises and Thanksgivings, to him who is the Author of our Being, and under whose daily Protection we live, and who bestows upon us all the good Things we enjoy. And there is no Christian Country, wherein this reasonable Service is not solemnly performed by Ministers, and attended by the People; to which, and to the Instructions and Exhortations of Christian Preachers, it is to be ascribed, that the Knowledge of the True God, and the Duty we owe him, is preserved to such a Degree upon the Minds of the Generality of the People; and that several Vices which were not only practis'd but publickly allowed in the Times of Heathenism, are

are scarce known, and never named without Abhorrence, in Christian Countries. Nor can it be said, with any Colour of Reason or Truth, that the general Order, Regularity, and the Sense of Duty, which is found in Christian Countries at this Day, compared with the Cruelties, Disorders, and Excesses of all Kinds, that are generally practised in Heathen Nations, is not owing to the Christian Institution and Worship, and to the Certainty of future Rewards and Punishments that Christ brought to Light; the Sense of which is preserved upon the Minds of the People by such publick Teaching. And though so great is the Corruption of human Nature, that notwithstanding those Means of Instruction, and those Restraints from Wickedness, many Disorders and Excesses are practised in Christian Countries; it is sufficient to our present Purpose, 'That if those Means and Restraints were removed, the Excesses would evidently be far greater and more general than they are; 'That the Commission of them among Christians is by far less frequent, and is attended with much more Caution and Shame than among Heathens; 'That besides those *general* Influences of Christianity, such Excesses are in some Measure balanced by the extraordinary Degrees of Piety, Purity, and Exactness of Life and Manners, which are observed by Multitudes of People in every Christian Country; 'That the Design of the Christian Institution was not to *force* Men to be good, but only to propose fit Motives and proper Encouragements and Assistances to make them so; and our Saviour himself supposes, that in his Kingdom here upon Earth

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there will always be ¹ Tares growing up with the Wheat, (a *Mixture* of good and bad) till he himself shall make the *final* Separation. Though his Kingdom is not of this World, it is in it; and it is a very unfair Inference, that because Wickedness is found in Christian Countries, therefore Christianity has fail'd of its End.

III. *A Divine Revelation was not only Expedient, but highly Needful, to be a sure Guide in Matters of Religion.* This follows from the Particulars which have been treated of under the last Head, in relation to the ancient Philosophers. For it is agreed on all Hands, that the most successful Efforts of mere *Natural Reason*, towards the Discovery of Divine Truths, and the Duties to be performed by us, with our Obligations to perform them, were made by the Philosophers. And, if they, after all their Searches, could never tell in what Manner God was to be worshipped, nor by what Means Sinners might be reconciled to him, and recover his Favour; ' If they could never come to a certain Knowledge concerning the Immortality of the Soul, and future Rewards and Punishments, which are the principal Motives to the Performance of our Duty, and the only Motives that can make it regarded by the Generality of Mankind; ' If the Differences among the Philosophers, concerning Points of the greatest Importance in Religion, were so many, and so eagerly pursued by the several Sects, that instead of informing Mankind in their Duty, they perplexed and distracted them, and at last left them under

1 Matt. xiii. 24.

greater

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greater Uncertainties than they were before, while no one had more Authority than another to prescribe a fix'd Scheme of Duty; ' If many of the Philosophers mixt Precepts of Vice with their Precepts of Virtue; and, ' If in Fact under their Direction and Discipline, the Heathen World and the Generality of Mankind in their several Ages, remain'd in a State of gross Idolatry, Uncleanneſs, Impiety, and Immorality of all Kinds; It follows, that either Mankind muſt remain irrecoverably in a State of Ignorance and Corruption, or that there muſt be ſome Divine Revelation, to help them out of it.

And, in Truth, it is very abſurd to ſuppoſe, That either Philoſophy, or any Thing but a Divine Revelation could do it. The Philoſophers plainly ſaw a great Degree of Darkneſs and Degeneracy in the Mind of Man; their Senſe of which is well expreſs'd by ' *Tully*, ' If, ſays he, ' Nature had ſo fram'd us, as to give us ' a full and perfect View of her, and an Ability ' to follow her as our Guide, then Mankind ' would have needed no other Teacher: But now, ' the Light ſhe has given us is no more than little Sparks, which we quickly extinguiſh by corrupt Lives and perverſe Opinions, ſo that the ' true Light of Nature is no where to be found.' And then he goes on, and ſays, ' There are in ' our Minds the *Seeds* of Virtue, by which Nature would conduct us to Happineſs, if they ' were allow'd to grow up. But now, no ſooner ' are we born, but we fall into a wretched Depravity and Corruption of Manners and Opinions.

' Cic. Tuſc. qu. 1. 3. Præf.

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'nions.' But though the Philosophers clearly saw this Corruption and Depravity, how could they find a Cure for it, when they knew not the Cause of it? The Recovery of Mankind depended wholly upon the Will and Pleasure of God, and the Method of it was not to be known but by Revelation from him. The Means whereby it was to be wrought, was a supernatural Assistance; which being his own free Gift, could not be made known and ensured by any other Hand. And therefore we find two of the greatest Philosophers, *Socrates* and *Plato*, despairing of the Recovery of Mankind out of a State of Error and Corruption, without some extraordinary Assistance from God. ¹ *Socrates*, speaking to the *Athenians* of himself, tells them, 'That when he is gone, they will fall into an irrecoverable State, unless God shall take care of them, and send them another Instructor.' And ² *Plato*, speaking of the wrong Methods of Education among the *Athenians*, says, "That in such a State of Things, whatever is kept right and as it ought to be, must be effected by a *Divine* Interposition." And ³ elsewhere he introduces one of the Scholars of *Socrates*, complaining how difficult it is to discover the Truth by human Reason, but yet acknowledging it to be every one's Duty to employ it, and to rely upon it, "Unless one could find some more sure and safe Pilot, such as a *Divine* Direction would be."

But we will suppose, what is far from being so, that one or other of the Philosophers had in their

¹ Plato Apol. Socratis. ² De Republ. l. 6. ³ Plato in Phæd.

several Writings discover'd the *Whole* of Religion; this would not by any Means have render'd a Divine Revelation needless, because whatever human Reason pretends to discover, must be judged by human Reason whether it be true or false, and it was not likely the *Generality* of People should be able to make such a Judgment, since there was scarce any one Point in which the Philosophers themselves did not oppose and contradict one another, while no one pretended to have any higher Guide than his own Reason; nor by consequence any Right to advance and establish his own Notions in Opposition to all the rest. So that, in this Case, it is manifest there would still have been wanting a Superior Authority to give a Sanction to some one Scheme, which could only be given, either immediately by God, or by some Person who gave evident Testimonies of his coming from God; and none of the Philosophers pretending to this, Mankind were left to be toss'd about by contrary Waves, without either Pilot, or Star, or Compass, to bring them to their Harbour. Some of the Philosophers had indeed an implicit Submission paid to their Dictates, but that was only from their own Scholars, who thought themselves bound to maintain the Doctrines of their Sect as such, though without any Pretence of Divine Authority in the Founder. But the Case was otherwise with our Saviour: He is said by the ¹ Evangelists to teach with *Authority*, and to teach with *Power*; and he had a Right so to do, because he proved by his Miracles that he had a Commission from God, and by that

¹ Mat. vii. 29. Luke iv. 32.

was fully empower'd to declare the Will of God, and to deliver to Mankind a fixt, certain, and indispensable Rule of Duty.

IV. *Mankind are obliged to Enquire, whether any Revelation has been made, and what Evidences there are of its coming from God.* If they believe they are the Creatures of God, they must think themselves bound to pay Adoration to him as their Creator, and cannot but be concern'd to know in what Manner he will be worship'd, and what is the Duty and Homage that he requires at their Hands. If they believe that they are *dependent* Creatures, and need the Favour and Protection of God, they cannot but desire to know in what Way they may most please him, and what are the surest Means of obtaining his Favour: If they believe that God governs the World, and that they live under his Providence, they cannot but desire the best Light that is to be had, from his own Declarations and the Examples of former Times, into the Rules of his Providence, and the ordinary Methods of his Dealings with Mankind: If they believe a State of future Rewards and Punishments, according to their Behaviour in this Life, they cannot but desire to know with the utmost Certainty and Assurance, what the Behaviour is which will secure the one, and avoid the other; and of all these Things there can be no Knowledge or Assurance equal to that which God himself gives. So that, while Men, out of a Zeal for what they call Natural Religion, or *unconcern'd* whether God has made any Revelation of his Will or not, they violate the Laws of Nature in a double Respect; First, by resisting that

that natural *Impression* which has always carried Men to *Enquire* after the Declarations of God's Will; and then, by an obstinate Unconcernedness for their own Safety and Welfare, contrary to the great and fundamental Law of Nature, Self-Preservation.

No one, who believes there is a God, and that he is a Being of infinite Power, Wisdom, and Knowledge, can doubt whether he *can* make a Revelation of his Will to Mankind; which may be fully attested to come from him, by Miracles, and Predictions of future Events, and the like undeniable Testimonies of a Divine Mission. To affirm this, would not only be in Effect to deny a God, but to contradict the universal Belief that we find in all Ages and Nations, of Divine Communications with Men; which shews at least the general Sense of Mankind, as to the Possibility of the Thing. And certainly, considering the false and very corrupt Notions the World was fal'n into, concerning God, and his Worship, and the other Duties we owe him, notwithstanding the *Examples* of some good Men in the successive Ages, who retained upon their Minds a Sense of Religion, and their *Endeavours* to convince Mankind of the natural Connection there is between Virtue and Happiness, Vice and Misery; in such Circumstances, it was very agreeable to the natural Notions we have of the Divine Goodness and Wisdom, to suppose that He would make a farther Revelation to Mankind, which might give them a clearer Knowledge, and a stronger Sense, of Duty; unless we will suppose that he had utterly abandon'd them.

They who think it had been most agreeable to the Divine Wisdom and Goodness, to have given Mankind one certain Rule from the Beginning, which should have been a sufficient Guide to all future Generations, and that the *Need* of a *new* Revelation implies a Want of Knowledge and Foresight in God; seem to forget, that Man was created a *Free* Agent, and as such *must* have it in his *Power* to fall into a State of Degeneracy and Corruption. And when the Generality of Mankind were actually fal'n into that State, the acquainting them by a special Revelation how they might be deliver'd out of it, (how their Natures might be rectified, and themselves restored to the Favour of God) could not surely be any Derogation to the Characters of Wisdom and Goodness. As well may we charge a Physician with Want of Skill, for not treating the Sound and the Sick by one and the same Rule, and while he is finding out Remedies, and prescribing Regulations, to restore a Constitution well nigh ruin'd by Debauchery and Excess, accuse him for *suffering* the Patient, who was in a State of *Liberty* and *Freedom*, to run into those pernicious Courses: As well may a Prince, who proclaims Conditions of Pardon and Favour to his rebellious Subjects, be charged with Want of Goodness, because he did not chain them up from their Cradles, and lay them under an utter *Inability* to rebel.

I cannot forbear in this Place to take Notice of the extreme Vanity and Presumption of those, who think themselves at Liberty to *disregard* the Gospel-Revelation, till God shall think fit to satisfy them, for what Reason he did not make it
sooner,

sooner, and why not to all Mankind *at once*. As if He were accountable to us for His Proceedings and Dispensations, and we at Liberty to refuse the Benefits or Deliverances He sends, because they come not at the Time or in the Manner that we judge most proper. Such Persons may as well ask, Why he made us Men and not Angels? Why he did not bring us into the World with the perfect Use of our Reason? Why he did not give to all Men the same Capacity and Leisure to know and learn their Duty? Why he has appointed *different Degrees* of Happiness in the next Life? — If indeed it appeared, that God would judge Men for the Transgression of any Duty which they did not and could not know to be their Duty, and that he would make them *accountable* for not being influenced by Motives which he had never acquainted them with; it would be difficult to reconcile such a Proceeding to the Divine Justice. But since the Contrary to this is true, and it is certain God will not punish Men for invincible Ignorance; surely He is at Liberty to dispense *Extraordinary Favours* at what Times, and in what Measures, to what Nations and to what Persons he thinks fit; and there can be no Doubt, but such Persons and Nations are bound to receive them with all the Gratitude and Thankfulness that is due from Creatures to their Creator. Are we then to quarrel with God, that He raises us to greater Degrees of Perfection, in order to advance us to greater Degrees of Happiness and Glory? Can there be a more flagrant Instance of Perverseness, than to *refuse* his Favours, for the very Reason which ought to increase our Thankfulness for them, namely, that

he vouchsafes them to *Us*, and not to *Others*? As to the Heathens, though the Light of Reason is but dim, yet they who have no better Light to walk by, and who honestly make use of that, as the only Guide God has given them, cannot fail to be mercifully dealt with by infinite Justice and Goodness. This is the Foundation of ¹ *St. Paul's* Reasoning upon the State of the Gentile World, 'That God did *not* then *leave himself* without *Witness*: The regular Returns of the *Seasons* of the Year, and the former and latter Rain coming at their set Times, and blessing them with plentiful Harvests, were visible Evidences of his Providence and Goodness. And though, notwithstanding these Evidences, they fell into Idolatry, yet because those were *Times of Ignorance*, in which they had no other Guide but the Light of Nature, God *winked at them*, or bore with them, and did not let loose his Vengeance, utterly to destroy them. *But now* (upon the Publication of the Gospel, as *St. Paul* goes on) *he commandeth all Men every where to repent*; *Because he hath appointed a Day in which he will judge the World in Righteousness, by that Man whom he hath ordained*; *whereof he hath given Assurance unto all Men, in that he hath raised him from the Dead*. And they who have received this express Command from God, and do not regard it, or, in other Words, they who enjoy the clear Light of the Gospel, and perversely reject it; instead of being entitled to Mercy, have their Guilt greatly aggravated, 'by shutting their Eyes against the Light he has given, 'by defeating the Measures

¹ Acts xiv. 16, 17, compared with xvii. 30, 31.

he has ordained for their Salvation ; ‘ by rejecting a Dispensation on no other Account, but because it is too pure and perfect, and ‘ by refusing the Happiness that God offers, for no other Reason, but because they will not come up to the Terms and Conditions upon which he offers it.

No less unreasonable are they, who plead, that if a Revelation is to be regarded, it ought to be made to every *Person*, or at least to every *Age*. For a *Rule of Duty* is one and the same to all Persons and in all Ages ; and when a standing Test is once given to distinguish Truth from Error, it is equally a Test at all Times, and in all Places ; supposing it to be convey’d to them with sufficient Evidence of its coming from God. That this is the Case of the Gospel-Revelation, I have shewn you at large in my first Letter ; and after God has given such Evidence as is abundantly sufficient to satisfy an ingenuous and unprejudiced Mind, it is very unreasonable to suppose that He is obliged to make every Age and every Country a Scene of new Miracles, only to satisfy the Disingenuity and Obstinacy of those, who have already received a sufficient Evidence, and yet will not be convinced. This is the Foundation of what our Saviour says in the Parable of the rich Man, *If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the Dead.* The Spirit of Infidelity is Proof against all Arguments and Conviction ; and the *Jews* are a lasting Testimony, how little it avails to be *Eye-witnesses* to Miracles, when Men have once resolved to be Infidels.

• Luke xvi. 31.

Since then a Revelation from God is not only possible, but also probable, and very agreeable to the Divine Wisdom and Goodness ; and we live in a Country which avowedly acknowledges and embraces the *Gospel-Revelation* ; and it is certain, in Fact, that the same has been acknowledged and embraced by many other Countries for above Sixteen Hundred Years, and still continues to be so, as the great Foundation of Men's Happiness, both temporal and eternal ; to say in this Case, that they are not obliged, according to their several Abilities and Opportunities, to enquire whether such a Revelation has been really made, and what Grounds there are to believe that it came from God, is to say, that they are at Liberty to renounce all the Rules of Reason and Prudence, as well as all Concern for the Safety and Welfare of Body and Soul.

V. *It is the Duty of Mankind to Receive for their Guide whatever Revelation comes from God ; and also to receive it whole and entire.* What the Evidences are of the Gospel-Revelation's coming from God, I have shewn at large in my former Letter ; and am so far from desiring Men to rest implicitly upon the Belief of any Age or Country, that the Design of the last Head is to convince them of the Obligation they are under, to make a strict *Enquiry* into those Evidences, and to see whether they be such as are fit for a reasonable and impartial Mind to acquiesce in. And if upon Examination, the Evidences of the Fact appear to be full and strong, and nothing be found in the Matter revealed, that is a *manifest* Contradiction in itself, or *evidently* inconsistent either with the
Divine

Divine Perfections, or with our natural Notions of Good and Evil; then I must add, that we are *bound* to receive it as a Rule of Faith and Practice, notwithstanding any colourable Suggestions to the contrary; because we are satisfied that it comes from God, who has a Right to give us a Rule, and who can give no Rule but what is true, and just, and good. So argues an accurate ¹ Reasoner upon this Head: ‘ Since God, in giving us the Light of Reason, has not thereby tied up his own Hands from affording us, when he thinks fit, the Light of *Revelation*, in any of those Matters wherein our Natural Faculties are able to give a *probable* Determination; Revelation, where God has been pleased to give it, must carry it against the *probable* Conjectures of Reason. Because the Mind not being *certain* of the Truth of that it does not *evidently* know, but only yielding to the *Probability* that appears in it, is bound to *give up* its Assent to such a Testimony, which, it is satisfied, comes from one who cannot err, and will not deceive.’ For the same Reason, we are not at Liberty to admit some *Part* of a Divine Revelation and reject the rest; we may not, for Instance, receive the Improvements it makes in the moral Law, and, stopping there, reject or disregard the Methods it provides for the Redemption of Mankind, nor the Ordinances and Institutions it lays down for the Peace and Edification of the Church and every particular Member of it, nor, in general, any Thing that it requires either to be believed or practised: Because, if the Whole appear to come

¹ Lock, Vol. 1. p. 328.

from God, every Part has equally the Stamp of Divine Authority; and he who rejects any Part, may for the same Reason reject the Whole.

And while I am shewing you the Obligation you are under to *receive* the Gospel-Revelation, it will be necessary that I caution you against *Scepticism*, or an unreasonable *Difficulty* in believing, and suspending the Assent of the Mind after it has received the proper Grounds of Conviction. Such Scepticks are all they, who will not be content with those Sorts of Proof which Things are capable of; for Instance, will not believe Things which were done before their own Time, because they did not see or hear them, or because they are not proved to them by Mathematical Demonstration, of which all historical Facts whatsoever are in their Nature equally incapable. Such also are they, who are so *partial* in giving their Assent, as to believe the Histories of *Julius* and *Augustus Cæsar* without the least Scruple, but are full of Doubts about the History of *Jesus Christ*, though supported by Evidences far more clear and numerous. To these may well be applied, what was said by an excellent Writer, in relation to this Sceptical Humour: 'Those who will pretend such
' Kind of Grounds for their Disbelief of any
' Thing, will never be able to persuade others,
' that the true Cause why they do not give their
' Assent, is not because they have no *Reason* for
' it, but because they have no *Mind* to it.' We are naturally very uneasy under a State of *Suspence* about any Thing we like and care in Earnest to pursue; and Men's Willingness to continue in

Dr. Wilk. Nat. Rel. p. 26.

Suspence

PASTORAL LETTER. III.

Suspence as to the Truth of the Gospel-Revelation, is a certain Sign that it is a Business they do not like, nor care for. And although this is not downright Infidelity, yet it makes Men indifferent about Religion, and unactive in their Christian Course, and takes off the *Force* and *Influence* of future Rewards and Punishments, almost as much as Infidelity itself.

VI. *Such and so many are the Excellencies of the Gospel-Revelation, that every wise and good Man must WISH it to be true, whether we consider the Ends it proposes, or the Means for attaining those Ends.*

The great Ends it proposes, are, ‘ The Perfection of human Nature, and the Happiness of Mankind, ‘ To remove us from the State of Brutes, and advance us to the Perfection of Angels, and, upon the Whole, ‘ To lay a sure Foundation for our Peace and Happiness, both Temporal and Eternal.

The Means it uses for attaining those great Ends are of several Sorts. For Instance; Fierceness and Cruelty, and an unrestrain’d Enjoyment of sensual Pleasures, being the distinguishing Characters of the Brutal Nature; the Gospel-Revelation abounds with Prohibitions of Anger, Malice, Hatred, Revenge, and the like brutal Qualities; and also lays the strongest Restraints upon sensual Pleasures and Delights, and strictly forbids the Enjoyment of them beyond the Bounds it has set. And this, not only in the outward Acts, but also in the inward Thoughts, Imaginations,

‘ See the first Letter, p. 11, 12.

and

and Desires ; which corrupt the Soul, and keep it in a *Disposition* to Acts of Cruelty and Unclean-ness, and in a Readiness to proceed to the Exercise of them, whenever Provocations or Enticements come in the Way.

And these Prohibitions duly attended to in the inward Desires as well as outward Acts, at the same Time that they set us above the Condition of Brutes, do also lay a Foundation for the Peace and Happiness of our Lives ; which Experience, as well as the universal Consent of the wisest Men in all Ages, proves to be interrupted and destroyed by nothing so much, as the indulging unruly Lusts and Passions. And whereas, next to these, the Happiness of this Life is greatly impair'd by Sickness, Want, Oppression, and many other temporal Calamities ; Christianity provides for our Comfort under all these, not upon the Principles of the ancient Philosophers, ' ¹ Because ' they are common to Mankind, and we cannot ' avoid them, and Death will put an End to ' them ;' but by assuring us, that they come from the Hand of a wise and good God, who can and will either deliver us from them, or support us under them, and that they are design'd by him to wean us from the Delights of this World, and to prepare us for the Enjoyment of a much better. Of the like Tendency are the many Precepts of the Gospel, which command us not to set our Hearts upon the Things of this World, but to pursue them with Moderation and Indifference, and a constant Resignation to the Will of God ; as these do not only prevent all the Vexation that

¹ See before, p. 69.

otherwise attends the Loss of them and our Disappointments about them, but also disengage the Heart from them, and give it greater Liberty, as well as a readier Disposition, to attend and pursue the Affairs of the next Life.

For though it is certain, that the Precepts of Christianity greatly tend to our Comfort and Happiness in this Life, it is as certain, that they are chiefly design'd to prepare us for the Happiness of another. The Rules of the Philosophers were many of them wisely calculated for the Good of human Society and the Members of it in this World; but had by no Means such a direct Tendency and Relation to the Spiritual Enjoyments of the *next*, as appears to be the general Aim and Tenor of the Rules of the Gospel. And as the Precepts of Christianity are Preparations for a Happiness of a very different Nature from that which any *worldly* Enjoyments afford, and have higher Views and nobler Ends than can be answer'd or attain'd by those of meer Morality; in these Respects, it was necessary that the Gospel Precepts should be built upon higher Principles than those of Morality; and that they should be of a more pure, refined, and exalted Nature, and enforced by higher and more noble Motives.

Accordingly, Christianity first gives a true Knowledge of the *Nature* of God; that it is not impure as the greatest Part of the Heathens believed, nor yet severe and terrible, according to the general Tenor of the Jewish Dispensation, as given to a *stiff-neck'd* and *obstinate* People; But that He is a Being of a pure Spiritual Nature, and is kind to us, and loves to do us Good, and has
given

given the highest Proof of it in sending his own Son to die for us and redeem us from eternal Death, to the End He might engage our Love and Obedience to Him, and we by that Means procure Eternal Happiness to ourselves. And by this Knowledge of his Nature, we are led to see, that he must not be worshipped according to the impure Rites of the Heathen Services, nor yet by the Sacrifices of Beasts, which were only *Types* of our Redemption by Christ; but with a steady Attention of the Soul, and a pure Heart, and sincere Intentions and Resolutions of Obedience; which our Saviour briefly expresses by worshipping God in '*Spirit and in Truth*, and which has a natural Tendency to fit us for the Divine Exercises of Praise and Contemplation in the next Life, and, in the mean while, is a Means of preserving a constant Communication between God and us, during our Continuance in this World.

To the same *Spiritual* Ends tend all the Duties of Life, which are either peculiar to the Christian Institution, or at least are carried by it to greater Degrees of Purity and Perfection. Such are, with regard to *ourselves*; Holiness of Heart; a sober Use of the Enjoyments of Life, with Mortifications and Self-denials as we find Occasion; an Indifference about the Things of this World, compared with our Care about the Things of the next; *the seeking those Things which are above,, where Christ sitteth at the Right Hand of God,* the *having our Conversation in Heaven*, the *laying up our Treasure in Heaven*, and the keeping a strict Watch over our *Thoughts* as well as *Actions*.

John iv. 23.

With

PASTORAL LETTER. 115

With regard to our *Neighbour*, The Forgiveness of Injuries, the Loving of Enemies, the Doing all the Good we can to Men for God's Sake, the Blessing them that curse us, the Praying for them that despitefully use us and persecute us, and the Overcoming Evil with Good. The Precepts which relate to ourselves, prepare us for Heaven, as it is a Place of *pure spiritual* Enjoyments; and those which relate to our Neighbour, prepare us for it, as it is a Place where Love, and Peace, and Unity reign, to the greatest Degree, and in the highest Perfection. And whereas not only the Heathen but also the *Jewish* Worship consisted chiefly in outward Rites and Ordinances; there are no more than two of that Sort in our Saviour's Institution, and those very plain and significant; Baptism, by which we are admitted into the Society of Christians, and all the Advantages of it; and the Lord's Supper, by which we declare our Continuance in that Society; thankfully commemorating the great Work of our Redemption by Christ, and applying to ourselves the Comforts and Benefits of it; and, at the same Time, resolving to live as *becomes* His Disciples, and receiving *Spiritual Strength* to support us in that Resolution.

But because, by reason of the Corruption of our Hearts, we are not naturally disposed to Spiritual Exercises, and the greatest Part of Mankind have their Thoughts employed about the Business or the Pleasures of this World, and are daily exposed to Temptations of one Kind or another; all which indispose them for Devotion, and make them ignorant or unmindful of their Duty, and very apt to fall into the Transgression of it; As

a fit Remedy for these Evils, the Gospel Institution has appointed a *publick Worship*, which every Christian is bound to attend, and a peculiar Order of Men to explain to the People their Duty, and remind them of it, and to *press* and *enforce* the several Obligations they are under to perform it.

And since the Passions and Appetites of Men lead them strongly to sensual Gratifications and Delights, and the Self-denials which the Gospel requires are so disagreeable to weak and corrupt Nature, that it is in vain to hope that Mankind will be kept to their Duty in either of these Respects by meer Reasoning and Exhortation; the Gospel Revelation has provided a Balance to our natural Weakness and Corruption, by giving us the *strongest Assurances* of Rewards and Punishments in another World; the one to deter us from gratifying our unruly Passions and inordinate Appetites, and the other to carry us with Cheerfulness and Resolution through all the Self-denials which the Gospel requires.

And as the *Love* of God is the highest Principle of Duty and Obedience to him, so the Gospel gives us the strongest and most forcible *Motive* to love him; namely, the sending his own Son into the World to die for us, and by his Death to reconcile us to himself, and make us eternally happy.

And as in all Cases, *Example* has a very powerful Influence, in order to practice; We have in our Saviour's Life the most perfect Pattern of Goodness, that ever the World beheld; of

* See the first Letter, p. 50, 51.

PASTORAL LETTER. 117

Meekness and Humility, of Patience and Contentment, of loving to do Good to Men, and of an entire Obedience and Submission to the Will of God.

Since also the Christian Institution, which so freely and openly condemns the Wickedness of the World, exposes the sincere Professors of it to Reproach and Persecution; Christ has arm'd and fortified them against these, not only by general Declarations of his Acceptance of the Services of those who ¹ *Confess him before Men*, and are ² *reproached and persecuted for his Sake*; but also by special Promises, that he will particularly *Confess them before God and his Angels*, and that *great shall be their Reward in Heaven*; which his Apostles express, ³ *by reigning with him*, and by ⁴ *receiving from his Hands a Crown of Life*.

And because the Sense of our natural Corruption and Infirmary might well discourage us from attempting to live up to the pure and spiritual Precepts of the Gospel, and to bring our Hearts to a thorow Liking of them, and an habitual Obedience to them; therefore the same Gospel ensures a *Supernatural Assistance* to all those who shall desire and pray for it, to support them against Temptation, and preserve in them a constant Desire and Endeavour to conform their Lives to the Laws of Christ. ⁵ *If ye, says our Saviour, being evil, know how to give good Gifts to your Children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?* By which Spi-

¹ Mat. x. 32. ² Mat. v. 11, 12. ³ 2 Tim. ii. 12. ⁴ Jam. i. 12. ⁵ Luke xi. 13.

rit, our Natures are ¹renewed, and our Hearts sanctified; and by the same Spirit we are ²strengthened with Might in the inner Man.

And, finally, because Men, through a Conscience of their manifold Offences against God, would be in perpetual Dread of the Divine Justice, and, in a Sense of their great Failings and Infirmities, would think themselves unworthy to approach a Being of infinite Purity, and despair of recovering his Favour when they have offended him by the Transgression of their Duty, therefore, to comfort sincere Christians, and encourage them to persevere in their Duty, the Son of God, who took our Nature upon him, hath satisfied the Divine Justice by dying for us, and is appointed the Intercessor between God and Man, and the Mediator of a New Covenant; by which all who sincerely desire and endeavour to perform their Duty, are not only assured of Supernatural Assistance to enable them to discharge it, but also upon a sincere Repentance, and Faith in him, are entitled to Pardon and Forgiveness if they transgress it, and assured that upon those Terms they shall be restored to the Favour of God, and the comfortable Hope of Eternal Life, notwithstanding such Transgressions.

This is the Account which the New Testament gives of the Redemption wrought for us by Christ: 'That his Death was a *Satisfaction* made to the Divine Justice for the Sins of Mankind; 'That through Faith in him, we are assured of the *Forgiveness* of our Sins upon our Repentance and Amendment; 'That being forgiven, we are

¹ Rom. xii. 2. Rom. vi. 13. ² Ephes. iii. 16.

justified in the Sight of God; 'That being justified in his Sight, we are *reconciled* to him; 'That he who reconciles us to God, *sanctifies* our Hearts by the Holy Spirit, to enable us to perform the Will of God, and thereby to *continue* in his Favour; 'That for the same End, he *Mediates* and *Intercedes* for us with God, while we continue in this present Life; and, 'That through him we have the Promise of *Life Eternal*.' This is a Scene full of Comfort to all those who comply with the Terms of the Gospel; and, that good Christians may be assured that this is the true Account, and that by Consequence the Hope and Comfort they build upon the Redemption wrought for them by Christ, and their Trust in him, are well founded; I will give them in one View, and in the Words of Scripture, what is plainly deliver'd there, upon each of the fore-mentioned Heads.

1. Christ, by his Death, made SATISFACTION to the DIVINE JUSTICE for the Sins of Mankind. This the Scripture sets forth by the Expressions, 'Of dying *for us*, 'Of bearing our Sins, 'Of *taking away* our Sins, 'Of being a *Propitiation* for our Sins, 'Of *Purchasing* and *Redeeming* or *Ransoming* us with the Price of his Blood.

—By dying FOR us.]—¹ *He laid down his Life for us* — ² *He died for our Sins* — ³ *He gave himself for us* — ⁴ *He was deliver'd for our Offences* — ⁵ *He tasted Death for every Man*. Agreeably to the Prophecy concerning him, ⁶ *He was*

¹ 1 John iii. 16. ² 1 Cor. xv. 3. ³ Tit. ii. 14.
⁴ Rom. iv. 25. ⁵ Heb. ii. 9. ⁶ Isa. liii. 5.
wounded

wounded for our Transgressions, he was bruised for our Iniquities.

— By BEARING our Sins.] — ¹ He was once offer'd to bear the Sins of many — ² He bare our Sins in his own Body on the Tree — Agreeably to the Prophecies concerning him, ³ He hath born our Griefs and carried our Sorrows — ⁴ The Lord hath laid on him the Iniquity of us all.

— By TAKING AWAY our Sins.] — ⁵ He was manifested to take away our Sins. — ⁶ He put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself — ⁷ He hath wash'd us from our Sins in his own Blood — ⁸ The Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all Sin.

— By being a PROPITIATION for our Sins.] — ⁹ Him God hath set forth to be a Propitiation through Faith in his Blood — ¹⁰ God sent his Son to be the Propitiation for our Sins — ¹¹ He is the Propitiation for our Sins, and not for our's only, but also for the Sins of the whole World.

— By PURCHASING, and REDEEMING or RANSOMING us, with the Price of his Blood.] — ¹² He purchased the Church of God with his own Blood — ¹³ He came to give his Life a Ransom for many — ¹⁴ He gave himself a Ransom for all — ¹⁵ We are bought with a Price — ¹⁶ In him we have Redemption through his Blood —

- ¹ Heb. ix. 28. ² 1 Pet. ii. 24. ³ Isa. liiii. 4.
⁴ Isa. liiii. 6. ⁵ 1 John iii. 5. ⁶ Heb. ix. 26.
⁷ Rev. i. 5. ⁸ 1 John i. 7. ⁹ Rom. iii. 25.
¹⁰ 1 John iv. 10. ¹¹ 1 John ii. 2. ¹² Acts xx.
¹³ Mat. xx. 28. ¹⁴ 1 Tim. ii. 6. ¹⁵ 1 Cor.
vi. 20. ¹⁶ Ephes. i. 7.

¹ *He hath redeemed us to God by his Blood—*
² *We are redeemed with the precious Blood of Christ.*

2. The Divine Justice being Satisfied, we are assured of the **FORGIVENESS OF OUR SINS** through Christ upon a sincere *Repentance*. His Fore-runner, ³ *John* the Baptist, preached the *Baptism of Repentance* for the Remission of Sins—Christ tells us, ⁴ *His Blood was shed for many for the Remission of Sins.*—After the Resurrection, the Apostles are directed by him, ⁵ *to preach Repentance and Remission of Sins in his Name, among all Nations.*—Accordingly, their Preaching was this: ⁶ *Him God hath exalted with his Right Hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give Repentance to Israel, and Forgiveness of Sins—*⁷ *Repent and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ, for the Remission of Sins—*⁸ *Thro' this Man is preached unto you the Forgiveness of Sins—*⁹ *To him give all the Prophets Witness, that through his Name whosoever believeth in him shall receive Remission of Sins—*¹⁰ *God was in Christ reconciling the World unto himself, not imputing their Trespases unto them—*¹¹ *In him we have Redemption through his Blood, the Forgiveness of Sins—* And we are commanded to ¹² *forgive one another, even as God, for Christ's Sake, hath forgiven us.*

Our Sins being forgiven, we are **JUSTIFIED** by Christ in the Sight of God. ¹³ *By him all that*

¹ Rev. v. 9. ² 1 Pet. i. 19. ³ Luke iii. 3.
⁴ Matt. xxvi. 28. ⁵ Luke xxiv. 47. ⁶ Acts v.
⁷ Acts ii. 38. ⁸ Acts xiii. 8. ⁹ Acts x.
¹⁰ 2 Cor. v. 19. ¹¹ Ephes. i. 7. ¹² E-
¹³ Acts xiii. 39. phes. iv. 32.

believe are justified ——— ¹ We are justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus. ——— ² We are justified freely by his Grace, through the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ. ——— ³ Being justified by his Blood, we shall be saved from Wrath through him. ——— ⁴ God hath made him to be Sin for us, who knew no Sin, that we might be made the Righteousness of God in him. ——— ⁵ Even the Righteousness of God, which is by Faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe.

4. Being justified by Christ, we are RECONCILED to God. ⁶ Being justified by Faith, we have Peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. ——— ⁷ We are reconciled to God by the Death of his Son. ——— ⁸ Us, who were Enemies, hath Christ reconciled in the Body of his Flesh, through Death. — ⁹ He hath made Peace through the Blood of his Cross, by him to reconcile all Things unto himself. — ¹⁰ God hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ; — ¹¹ Who suffered for Sin, that he might bring us unto God. — And ¹² we are accepted in the Beloved.

5. Having reconciled us to God, he SANCTIFIES our Hearts by the Holy Spirit, to enable us to perform our Duty, and thereby to continue in God's Favour. ——— ¹³ We are chosen to Salvation, through Sanctification of the Spirit. — and ¹⁴ through Sanctification of the Spirit, unto Obedience. — ¹⁵ We are sanctified, through the Offering of the

¹ 1 Cor. vi. 11.² Rom. iii. 24.³ Rom. v. 9.⁴ 2 Cor. v. 21.⁵ Rom. iii. 22.⁶ Rom. v. 1.⁷ Rom. v. 10.⁸ 1 Cor. i. 22, 22.⁹ Col. i. 20.¹⁰ 2 Cor. v. 18.¹¹ 1 Pet. iii. 18.¹² Ephes.

i. 6.

¹³ 2 Thes. ii. 13.¹⁴ 1 Pet. i. 2.¹⁵ Heb.

x. 10.

PASTORAL LETTER. 123

Body of Jesus Christ.——¹ God hath not called us to Uncleaness but unto Holiness,——*who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit.*——² The Spirit of God dwelleth in us, and ³ our Body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost, and ⁴ we are an Habitation of God through the Spirit. — ⁵ We are renewed by the Holy Ghost—and quickened ⁶ by the Spirit—and strengthened ⁷ with Might by the Spirit in the inner Man.—And ⁸ it is through the Spirit that we mortify the Deeds of the Body——by which Deeds ⁹ we grieve and quench the Spirit.

6. He who assists us by his ¹⁰ Spirit upon Earth, to enable us to do the Will of God, and thereby to continue in his Favour, is our constant MEDIATOR, INTERCESSOR, and ADVOCATE with God in Heaven, to present our Prayers for the Supply of our Wants, and to obtain a compassionate Regard to our Failings and Infirmities.

¹¹ He is the Mediator of the New Covenant.——

¹² There is one Mediator between God and Man, even the Man Christ Jesus.——¹³ He makes Intercession for us at the Right Hand of God.——¹⁴ He appears in the Presence of God for us.——¹⁵ No Man cometh unto the Father but by him.——He ¹⁶ is able to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

——¹⁷ If any Man Sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous.—He is touched

¹ 1 Thes. iv. 7. 8. ² Rom. viii. 9, ³ 1 Cor. vi. 19. ⁴ Ephes. ii. 22. ⁵ Tit. iii. 5. ⁶ John vi. 63. ⁷ Ephes. iii. 16. ⁸ Rom. viii. 13. ⁹ Ephes. iv. 30. ¹⁰ 1 Thes. v. 19. ¹¹ Luke xi. 13. ¹² Heb. xii. 24. ¹³ 1 Tim. ii. 5. ¹⁴ Rom. viii. 34. ¹⁵ Heb. ix. 24. ¹⁶ John xlv. 6. ¹⁷ Heb. vii. 25. ¹⁸ 1 John ii. 1. Heb. iv. 15, 16.

with the Feeling of our Infirmities, and therefore let us come boldly to the Throne of Grace, that we may find Grace and Mercy to help in Time of Need—and¹ let us draw near with a true Heart, and full Assurance of Faith.—In him we have Boldness, and Access with Confidence.

7. As it is he, who enables us to do the Will of God and to preserve his Favour in this Life, so it is *through him* that we are made Partakers of LIFE ETERNAL: ² *The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the World* — ³ *to seek and to save that which was lost* — ⁴ *that we might live through him---that the World through him might be saved, ---* ⁵ *that believing, we might have Life through his Name.-----* ⁶ *That whosoever believe in him, should not perish, but have everlasting Life.---* ⁷ *Through him we are saved from Wrath.-----* ⁸ *He hath delivered us from the Wrath to come.---* ⁹ *Eternal Life is the Gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.-----* ¹⁰ *God hath given us eternal Life, and this Life is in his Son-----* ¹¹ *who is the Captain of our Salvation---* ¹² *the Author of eternal Salvation to all them that obey him:---* ¹³ *Neither is there Salvation in any other; for there is none other Name under Heaven given among Men, whereby we must be saved.*

What has been said under this Sixth General Head, is a short View of the Christian Institu-

¹ Heb. x. 22. Ephes. iii. 12.

³ Luke xix. 10. ⁴ 1 John iv. 9.

⁶ John iii. 16. ⁷ John iii. 17.

Rom. v. 9. ⁹ Rom. vi. 23.

¹¹ Heb. ii. 10. ¹² Heb. v. 9.

² John iv. 14.

⁵ John xx. 31.

⁸ 1 Thes. i. 10.

¹⁰ 1 John v. 11.

¹³ Acts iv. 12.

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tion, both in the Ends it proposes, and the Means for attaining those Ends; and it appears in this View, that the Method which the Gospel lays down for our Salvation, is throughout a consistent and uniform Scheme, worthy of God, and contrived with the greatest Wisdom and Goodness for the Comfort and Happiness of Man. It appears also, how unable human Reason was, to direct us either to the *Ends*, or the *Means*, and that however the due Use and Application of our Reason may answer the Purposes of this Life, it is by no Means sufficient to guide us in our Way to the next.

But if, after God has made so full and clear a Revelation in what Way and upon what Terms he will save us, Men will resolve to be their own Guides, and refuse to be saved in the Way that he has appointed; this is at their own Peril. If some will believe, that trusting in Christ is their *whole* Duty, and so excuse themselves from the Observation of the moral Law, and others will affirm that the Observation of the moral Law is sufficient, and so will forego the Benefit of Christ's Redemption; if some will contend that Christ has done all; and others that he has done nothing; to both these it is sufficient to say, that they are very vain and presumptuous in setting up the Opinion and Imagination of weak and fallible Men, against the infallible Testimony of Persons sent and inspired by God. The Gospel-Account is as full and express as Words can make it, on one Hand, That Faith in Christ is the Foundation of a Christian's *Title* to Heaven, and on the other Hand, That Repentance and good Works are necessary Conditions of *obtaining* it.

It may not be improper, before I shut up this Head, to observe that several of our most eminent ¹ Divines after the Restoration, set themselves both by Preaching and Writing to enlarge upon the Importance of Moral Duties, and to recommend them with great Earnestness to the Regard of the People; to such a Degree, as to stand charged by others with too great a Disregard of the Doctrines and Duties peculiar to Christianity. Whereas, the Case in Reality was this. During the Times of Confusion, many of the Preachers had not only forbore to inculcate the Duties of Morality, but had laboured to depreciate them; to persuade the People that Faith was All, and Works Nothing. And therefore the Clergy after the Restoration, in order to take off those unhappy Impressions, found themselves obliged to inculcate with more than ordinary Diligence, the Necessity of moral Duties in the Christian Life, and to labour to restore them to their proper Share in the Christian Scheme. But those of them, who with the honest View I have mentioned, laboured the most zealously in that Way, were at the same Time as zealous to explain to the People the great Work of our Redemption by *Jesus Christ*, as the Means of Salvation which God has appointed: ² The Corruption and Misery into which Mankind was sunk by the Fall of our first Parents; ³ The Necessity of a Mediator, to recover them, and restore them to the Favour of God; ⁴ The Incarnation of the

¹ Dr. Wilkins, Barrow, Tillotson, Scot. ² Till. vol. III. 303, 320, 321, 595. Bar. vol. I. 464. Vol. II. 222. Vol. III. 228. ³ Till. vol. II. 129. Scot. vol. I. 201. Vol. III. 6. ⁴ Till. vol. I. 437, 460. Vol. II. 261. Bar. vol. II. 235.

Son of God for that End; ¹ The Goodness of God in appointing his own Son to be the Mediator between Him and Us; ² The Comfort of having a Mediator of our own Nature; ³ The Expiation made for Sin by the Suffering of Christ; ⁴ The Wisdom of God in making Christ a Sacrifice for Sin; ⁵ The inestimable Value of his Sufferings, for the Redemption of all Mankind; ⁶ Our Justification by Faith in him, ⁷ and Sanctification by the Holy Spirit, and ⁸ his Intercession for us at God's Right Hand. In general, what can be more express, than the Doctrine laid down by ⁹ Archbishop *Tillotson*, concerning our Redemption by Christ, ' That Men are to place all ' their Hope and Confidence of Salvation in Jesus ' Christ the Son of God; that is, to believe that ' through the alone Merit of his Death and Sufferings, God is reconciled to us; and that, only ' upon the Account of the Satisfaction which he ' hath made to Divine Justice, we are restored to ' the Favour of God, and our Sins are pardoned ' to us, and we have a Title to eternal Life. Not ' but that there are *Conditions* on our Part to make ' us capable of these Benefits, Faith and Repentance and sincere Obedience and Holiness of Life, ' without which we shall never be made Partakers

¹ Till. vol. I. 445. Scot, vol. III. 24, 42. ² Till. vol. I. 471. ³ Till. vol. I. 477. Vol. II. 361. Scot, vol. III. 187. ⁴ Till. vol. I. 473. Vol. II. 637. Bar. vol. I. 464. Vol. II. 339. Scot, vol. III. 167. ⁵ Bar. vol. II. 313. Vol. III. 454. ⁶ Till. vol. III. 480. Bar. vol. II. 71. ⁷ Till. vol. III. 300, 320, 488, 489. Scot. vol. III. 83, 151, 164. ⁸ Scot. vol. III. 183. ⁹ Vol. II. 488.

of them; but that the Satisfaction of Christ is the only *meritorious* Cause of those Blessings.'

And together with the several Heads of our Redemption by Christ, thus explained and enlarged upon by those who had most distinguished themselves in pressing the Duties of Morality; the People were further instructed by the same Persons, 1 That Baptism is an Initiation into a new Covenant with God; and the Lord's Supper, a Renewal of that Covenant; and they were admonished by them, 2 of the great Duties of assembling in the publick Worship of God, and 3 frequently receiving the Holy Sacrament, and 4 hearing and reading the Holy Scriptures, as their only sure and complete Rule both of Faith and Practice. Concerning all which, 5 one of those Writers, after having described in a lively Manner the Excellencies of Moral Duties, goes on thus: 'The *Positive* Parts of Religion are our Duty as well as these, and God by his Sovereign Authority executes them at our Hands; and unless, when Jesus Christ hath been sufficiently proposed to us, we do sincerely *believe* in him---unless we strike Covenant with him by *Baptism*, and frequently renew that Covenant in the *Lord's Supper*---unless we diligently attend on the *publick Assemblies* of his Worship---there is no Pretence of *Morality* will bear us out, when we appear before his dread Tribunal.' To which I must add, that another of those Divines, who wrote an excellent

1 Scot, vol. II. 296. Vol. III. 283. 2 Till. vol. I. 519, 537. Scot, vol. II. 115. 3 Till. vol. I. 248. Scot, vol. II. 294. 4 Till. vol. I. 308. Vol. II. 243. 5 Scot, vol. II. 68.

Treatise of *Natural Religion* (i. e. of Principles and Duties *merely moral*, and such as are discoverable by the Strength of Reason exerted and improved to the highest Degree that our natural Faculties are capable of) concludes with the fullest Declaration of the *Insufficiency* of them to instruct us in our Duty, or to enable us to perform it, or to conduct us to Happiness, without those clear Lights and Supernatural Assistances which the Gospel-Dispensation conveys to us. His Words are these. ‘ 1 Notwithstanding all that can be said of *Natural Religion*, it cannot be denied, but that in this dark and degenerate State into which Mankind is sunk, there is a great Want of a clearer Light to discover our Duty to us with greater Certainty, and to put it beyond all Doubt and Dispute what is the good and acceptable Will of God; and of a more powerful Encouragement to the Practice of our Duty by the Promise of a supernatural Assistance, and by the Assurance of a great and eternal Reward. And all these Defects are fully supplied by that clear and perfect Revelation, which God hath made to the World by our Blessed Saviour.’ And elsewhere he says, ‘ 2 It is not the mere performance of such *moral* Duties as are of Natural Obligation, unless they be done in Obedience to Christ as our *Lord* and *Lawgiver*, and in Reliance upon him for his Pardon and Acceptance as our *Priest* and *Saviour*, that can make us acceptable to Christ, or entitle us to the Name of Christians.’ 3 And speaking of the Salvation of

1 Dr. Wilkins, l. 2. c. 9.

2 Wilk. Sermon. p. 51.

3 Nat. Rel. p. 397.

those Heathens who lived according to the Light of Nature, ('That when God hath not thought ' fit to tell us, how He will be pleased to deal ' with such Persons, it is not fit for us to tell ' *Him* how He *ought* to deal with them;') he adds; ' Only, of this we are sufficiently assured, ' that in all *Ages* and *Places* of the World, all ' that are saved, are saved by the Mercy of God, ' and by the *Merits* of Jesus Christ, who is the ' *Lamb* slain from the *Foundation of the World*; ' the Scripture having expressly told us, *That there ' is no Salvation in any other; for there is none other ' Name under Heaven given among men, whereby ' we must be saved.*'

I have already observed, that the Duties of Morality were carried by our Saviour to much higher Degrees of Purity and Perfection, than had been practised before either by *Jew* or *Gentile*; agreeably to the *pure* and *spiritual* Nature of that Happiness which he revealed to Mankind; and the Necessity of fitting the Soul for the full Enjoyment of it in the next Life, by habituating ourselves to it, during our Abode in this. And for the same End, we find throughout the New Testament the Practice of Moral Duties enforced, and the Breach of them discouraged, not so much from Considerations relating to this World, or any *temporal* Benefit accruing from thence to ourselves or others, as ' From the *Sanctions* of Duty, which the Civil Relations among *Men* have received from God, ' From the Manner of God's Dealing with Men, ' From the Example of *Christ* our Lord and Master, ' From the Regard we owe to our *Holy Profession*, ' from

' So also, Bar. vol. III. p. 449, 464.

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the Relation we bear to *Heaven* while we live here upon Earth, ¹ From the different Spiritual Sources of Moral and Immoral Actions, and, ² From the Influence which our Regard or Disregard to the Duties of Morality, will have upon our *future* State.

—From the *Sanctions* of Duty, which the Civil Relations among men have received from GOD. Magistrates must be obeyed, not only ¹ *for Wrath*, but for *Conscience*-sake, because they are the *Ordinance* of God; and they must only conduct themselves towards the People, ² *as the Ministers of God to them for Good*. ³ Husband and Wife must inviolably adhere to each other, because they are joined together and made one by God, who ⁴ *at the Beginning made them Male and Female*, and by whom ⁵ *Whoremongers and Adulterers will be judged*. Servants are commanded to be obedient to their Masters ⁶ *in Singleness of Heart, fearing God; with good Will doing Service as to the Lord, and not unto Men*; and Masters to be just and merciful to their Servants, as knowing ⁷ *that they also have a Master in Heaven*. And, in general, ⁸ *Whatever we do*, the Gospel enjoins us to do it *heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto Men*; and that ⁹ *whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we do all to the Glory of God*.

---From the Manner of GOD's Dealings with Men. We must be kind to ¹⁰ *Enemies* as well as Friends, because God *maketh his Sun to rise on*

¹ Rom. xiii. 2, 5. ² Rom. xiii. 4. ³ Mat. xix. 4, 6. ⁴ Mat. xix. 4. ⁵ Heb. xiii. 4. ⁶ Ephes. vi. 5, 6, 7. ⁷ Col. iii. 22. ⁸ Ephes. vi. 9. ⁹ Col. iii. 23. ¹⁰ 1 Cor. x. 31. ¹¹ Mat. v. 44, 45.

the Evil and on the Good, and sendeth Rain on the Just and on the Unjust. We must ¹ forgive one another, because God for Christ's Sake hath forgiven us. And upon God's having ² manifested his Love to us in sending his only begotten Son into the World, that we might live through him, is grounded the Inference which St. John makes, ³ Beloved if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another; and the loving one another is the most constant and forcible Motive of good Offices to one another.

—From the Example of CHRIST our Lord and Master. ⁴ Learn of me, says he, for I am meek and lowly, and ye shall find Rest to your Souls: And, says the Apostle, ⁵ Walk in Love, as Christ also loved us, and gave himself for us.---⁶ Let every one of us please his Neighbour for his Good to Edification: for even Christ pleased not himself.---⁷ Let nothing be done through Strife or Vain-glory, but in Lowliness of Mind let each esteem other better than themselves: Look not every man on his own Things, but every Man also on the Things of others; Let this Mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus,---⁸ As he that hath called you is Holy, so be ye Holy in all Manner of Conversation.

—From the Regard we owe to our HOLY PROFESSION. Immoralities of all Kinds are forbidden to Christians, because they ought to walk ⁹ worthy of the Vocation wherewith they are called; with all Lowliness and Meekness, with long-

¹ Ephes. iv. 32. ² 1 John iv. 9. ³ 1 John iv. 11. ⁴ Mat. 11. 29. ⁵ Ephes. v. 2. ⁶ Rom. xv. 2, 3. ⁷ Phil. ii. 3, 4, 5. ⁸ 1 Pet. i. 15. ⁹ Ephes. iv. 1, 2, 3.

suffering, forbearing one another in Love; endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.—¹ They must walk worthy of God, who hath called them to his Kingdom and Glory.—² They must walk as Children of Light.—³ Their Conversation must be as becomes the Gospel of Christ.—⁴ They must adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all Things; and take Care that the Name ⁵ of God and his Doctrine be not blasphemed, or evil spoken of among the Gentiles through them.—We are to ⁶ walk honestly (or decently) as in the Day, (the Day-light of the Gospel) not in Rioting and Drunkenness, not in Chambering and Wantonness, not in Strife and Envy; and we must put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no Provision for the Flesh, to fulfil the Lusts thereof.

—From the Relation we bear to HEAVEN, while we live here upon Earth.—⁷ Our Conversation (or Citizenship) is in Heaven; and because we are only ⁸ Strangers and Pilgrims upon Earth, we must abstain from fleshly Lusts, (the inordinate enjoyments of this World) which war against the Soul; and we are also put in Mind that we are only ⁹ Sojourners here, and have no continuing City, but seek one to come, that we may not set up our Rest in this World, nor be too solicitous about the Things of it, but may have our heavenly Country always in our Eye, and make it our greatest Concern to arrive safely there.

¹ 1 Thes. ii. 12. ² Ephes. v. 8. ³ Phil. i. 27.
⁴ Tit. ii. 10. ⁵ 1 Tim. vi. 1. Tit. ii. 5. ⁶ Rom.
viii. 13, 14. ⁷ Phil. iii. 20. ⁸ 1 Pet. ii. 11.
⁹ Heb. xi. 16.

—From the different Spiritual SOURCES of Moral and Immoral Actions. ¹ Love, Peace, Gentleness, Goodness, Meekness, Temperance, are recommended to our Practice, as *Fruits of the Spirit*, and as the ² *Wisdom* that is from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits. But ³ Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanneſs, Lasciviousneſs, Hatred, Variance, Emulation, Wrath, Strife, Envy, Murders, Drunkenneſs, Revellings, and ſuch like, are represented by the Gospel, as *Works of the Fleſh*, and the Fruits of that Wiſdom, ⁴ which *deſcendeth not from above, but is earthly, ſenſual, devilish*; as proceeding from the Corruptions of Nature without the Guidance of God's Holy Spirit, and from the Suggestions of the Devil, of whom the Gospel every where warns us as an implacable Enemy to Mankind, ⁵ *who walketh about ſeeking whom he may devour*, and whose Wiles and Snares we muſt not hope to eſcape but by Watchfulneſs and Prayer.

—From the Influence which our Regard or Diſregard to the Duties of Morality will have upon our FUTURE STATE. St. Paul concludes a large Catalogue of Sins, Fornication, Uncleanneſs, Wrath, Envy, &c. with this juſt but terrible Sentence, ⁶ *Of which, I tell you before, as I have alſo told you in Time paſt, that they which do ſuch Things ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God*. On the contrary, the Gospel recommends the Practice of Humility, by enſuring to it ⁷ *the King-*

¹ Gal. v. 22, 23. ² Jam. iii. 17. ³ Gal. v. 19, 20, 21. ⁴ Jam. iii. 15. ⁵ 1 Pet. v. 8. Ephes. vi. 11, 18. ² Tim. ii. 26. ⁶ Gal. v. 21. Mar. v. 3.

dom of Heaven; Meekness, because it is ¹ in the Sight of God of great Price; Mercifulness, as the Means of ² obtaining Mercy; Temperance, as necessary to the running our ³ Christian Course with Success; Purity of Heart, as a necessary Preparation to the ⁴ seeing God; Charity, as it is the ⁵ laying up in Store for ourselves a good Foundation against the Time to come, that we may attain Eternal Life; Patience, and Perseverance in well-doing, because our ⁶ light Affliction, which is but for a Moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding Weight of Glory; While we look not at the Things which are seen, but at the Things which are not seen, because the Things which are seen are Temporal, but the Things which are not seen are Eternal.

This is the true Gospel-Morality; which makes all the Relations among Men, and the Duties belonging to them, to center in God, and connects the Offices of this Life with the Happiness of the next; and it is no other in Effect, than that which St. Paul more briefly lays down in the following Words: ⁷ The Grace of God that bringeth Salvation, hath appeared to all Men, Teaching us, that denying Ungodliness, and worldly Lusts, we should live Soberly, Righteously, and Godly in this present World; looking for that blessed Hope, and the glorious Appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify

¹ 1 Pet. iii. 4. ² Mat. v. 7. ³ 1 Cor. ix. 25.
⁴ Mat. v. 8. ⁵ 1 Tim. vi. 18, 19. ⁶ 2 Cor. iv.
17, 18. ⁷ Tit. ii. 11, 12, 13, 14.

unto himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works.

I am aware, that in the View of Christianity I have given under this Sixth general Head, many Things are laid down, which some late Writers, who yet disown the Name of Infidels, have with much Confidence pronounced to be *Superstition*. And that the same Charge might not be repeated, I judged it necessary to shew thus particularly from the plain and express Words of Scripture, that this is no other Superstition than what was taught by Christ and his Apostles. It is indeed to be greatly lamented, that in a Christian Country there should be any Need to prove, that the Work of our Redemption by the Death of Christ, with the Benefits thereby obtained for us, is a fundamental Doctrine of the Christian Faith. But when we see so much Pains taken to represent these Things as Corruptions in Religion, we who have the Care of Souls, can think no Pains too much to explain and inculcate those great and necessary Truths, by shewing from the whole Tenor of the New Testament, that they are the Means which God himself hath appointed for the Salvation of Mankind.

The Excellence of the Christian Institution, joined to the Evidences of his Divine Authority as set forth in my former Letter, naturally leads,

VII. *To the great Sinfulness and Danger of rejecting it, or, in other Words, to the great Guilt and Perverseness of INFIDELITY.* For though it is not in any Man's Power to believe what he pleases, because as Things appear at this

or that Time to his Understanding, so his Belief must be, and we can neither be charged with Guilt, nor be liable to Punishment, for what we cannot help; yet in searching after Truth, there are two Things which are in our Power, 'The Use of our *Faculties*, and 'The *due* and *impartial* Use of them; and if we fail of finding out the Truth, or fall into Error, by not using our Faculties at all, or by using them unduly, we are certainly accountable to God who gave them, and who as our Sovereign Lord hath a Right to require a due Use, and to punish the Abuse of them. In speculative Matters, which no Way concern our Duty or Happiness, Men may be as ignorant as they please without Danger of Guilt; but to be an Infidel in *Religion* through Sloth and Carelessness, for Want of examining at all, or through a slight and superficial Examination, makes Men highly guilty in the sight of God; both as it is a Neglect of using and applying the Faculties he has given us, and as it is manifestly contrary to all the Rules of right Reason, not to use them in a Matter which so nearly concerns our Safety and Interest; especially, when the Evidences of Christianity lie so open to the general Apprehension of Mankind, and may so easily be entered into and understood.

No less guilty are they in the Sight of God, who in examining the Grounds of Religion, suffer their Minds to be influenced by vicious Inclinations, or by Pride and an Affection of Singularity, or by any immoral and indirect Motive whatsoever. It is every Day's Experience and

Observation, how greatly the Judgments of Men are influenced in temporal Matters by their own private Convenience, and Interest, and other Considerations, which do not at all belong to the Matter they are to judge of; and this may be much more suspected in the Judgment they make of the Truth of Christianity, considering how contrary its Precepts are to the inordinate Desires and Inclinations of Nature. We cannot enter into the Hearts of Men, to see upon what Motives they act, and under what Influences they reason; but when we consider the Strength and Clearness of the Evidences of Christianity, with the Advantages and Excellencies of the Gospel-Institution, and the strict Restraints it lays upon Excess and Uncleaness of all Kinds, we cannot but see that it requires the greatest Degree of Charity, to ascribe their Infidelity to any Thing but the Love of Vice, or the Love of Contradiction. This is what the ¹ Apostle calls *an evil Heart of Unbelief*; and where that is the Case, Infidelity is a Sin of the highest Nature; ‘ As it corrupts the Reason and Understanding which God hath given, and subjects it to base and unworthy Influences; ‘ As it degrades human Nature, and carries in it an *Indifference* whether we be immortal or die like Beasts, or rather a Desire that we may die like them; ‘ As it is an Affront to God, in rejecting his Messengers, who come with clear and evident Testimonies of their being sent by him; ‘ As it makes him a Liar, and is a manifest Contempt of his Goodness in sending a Revelation, and defeats his gracious Designs and Measures for the

¹ Heb. iii. 12.

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Salvation of Mankind. Well, therefore, might our Saviour denounce Damnation against all those who did not receive Him and his Doctrine; ¹ *He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved, but he that believeth not, (i. e. disbelieveth) shall be damned.* ² *If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your Sins.* ³ *He that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God: And this is the Condemnation, that Light is come into the World, and Men loved Darkness rather than Light, because their Deeds are evil.* ⁴ *If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had Sin, but now they have no Cloak for their Sin.* And agreeable to these are the Declarations of his Apostles. St. John reckons the Unbelievers among those ⁵ *who shall have their Portion in the Lake that burneth with Fire and Brimstone.* St. Paul tells us, ⁶ *that God will take Vengeance on them that know him not, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; and the Author to the Hebrews, ⁷ How shall we escape, if we neglect so great Salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them Witness both with Signs and Wonders, and with divers Miracles, and Gifts of the Holy Ghost? And He that despised Moses's Law, died without Mercy. Of how much sorer Punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under Foot the Son of God, and hath counted the Blood of the Covenant, wherewith*

¹ Mark xvi. 16. ² John viii. 24. ³ John iii. 18, 19. ⁴ John xv. 22. ⁵ Rev. xxi. viii. ⁶ 2 Th. ii. 1. ⁷ Heb. ii. 3, 4. ⁸ Heb. x. 28, 29.

he was sanctified, an unholy Thing, and hath done Despight to the Spirit of Grace? Agreeably to what John the Baptist had declared to the Jews, ¹ He that believeth not the Son, shall not see Life, but the Wrath of God abideth in him.

I mention these Things, to shew the Infidels of our Age, that to believe or not believe, is far from being a Matter of Indifference, as they would make it; and to convince those who are in Danger of being seduced by them, how nearly they are concerned, before they give up themselves to such Guides, to give the Evidences of Christianity a thorough and impartial Examination. For which End, I recommend to them the three followings Tests of Sincerity, 1. That they find their Hearts sincerely disposed to embrace any Doctrine, and follow any Rule of Life, that shall appear to come from God. 2. That they inwardly *wish* to find a Religion well-founded, which provides a Remedy for the Corruptions of our Nature, and ensures to good Men a State of Happiness and Immortality after this Life. 3. That they find in themselves no Lust, or other Vice or Passion, which inclines them to *wish* that such a Religion may *not* be well founded. Let but Men, before they enter upon their Examination, put the Heart under these Guards, and I am firmly persuaded there is not the least Danger that Infidelity will ever take hold of it.

But how great soever the Guilt of Infidelity may be, a Zeal to *Promote* it is still greater; as carrying in it not only all the Aggravations that attend the Disbelief of a Revelation from God,

¹ John iii. 36.

but also great Injustice and Uncharitableness towards Men. He who endeavours to bring others to a Belief of Christianity, approves himself to be a Lover of Mankind, in shewing them the Way to an Eternity of Happiness, and abridging them only of such Enjoyments as would be evidently injurious to their Bodies and Estates, and by making their Minds easy and quiet, in a comfortable Assurance that in all Events they are safe. But the Infidel, while he indulges Men in Enjoyments which the Gospel forbids, cannot *assure* them that there are *not* Rewards and Punishments in another World, which will be bestowed and inflicted by the Rules that the Gospel lays down. As in all Cases, to endeavour to persuade Men out of the Belief of Things which for ought we know *may* be true, is unfair; so to do this in Matters which nearly concern their Welfare and Interest, is *unjust*. Nor is it only unjust, but also very *uncharitable*, to endeavour to deprive Men of a Belief, upon which the Comfort and Happiness of their Lives depend; unless such Belief were attended with some great Calamity or Misery in other Respects. And further, it is both unjust and uncharitable to *Society* and *Government*, to endeavour to root out of the Minds of Men those powerful Restraints from Wickedness and Violence, that Christianity had laid them under; the Influences of which are a great Security to Peace and Order, and have their Effects in innumerable Cases that human Laws cannot reach. Add to this, that the highest Security that Men can give to one another, is an Oath; which in Christian Countries is taken upon the Holy Gospels. And as the Obligation of the Oath so taken, is understood to arise from

a Belief of the *Truth* of those Gospels, and of the Threatnings and Judgments denounced by them, one cannot well conceive how it should take hold of the Conscience of an Infidel. So that the Promoters of Infidelity, who so evidently weaken, if not destroy, the Bonds of Society and Government, may well be looked upon as publick Enemies to Mankind.

'Tis true, indeed, in Exchange for the Comforts and Advantages they take away from private Persons and public Societies, they promise a quiet and uninterrupted Enjoyment of Pleasures which the Christian Religion forbids; but in this too they are unjust, in that they promise what they know they are not able to perform. The utmost Progress they can ordinarily hope for in promoting Infidelity, is to persuade Men that the Gospel Revelation, which contains such terrible Threatnings against Lust and Uncleanneſs of all Kinds, is *not* certainly true; but while they pretend not to prove, that it is certainly *not true*, they cannot free a Course of Voluptuousness from great Mixtures of Doubts and Fears; and these are perpetually revived and heightened, by seeing such Numbers of wise and good Men embrace the Christian Faith, and act upon it; giving in their Lives a daily Testimony of their firm Belief of the Truth of it. For though this is not a direct Proof that the Gospel is true, it is a great Presumption that there is a *Strength* in the Evidences of the Truth of it, which their Lusts and Passions will not let them see; and, at the same Time, it is a daily Warning to them, that the Contempt of it is too great a Hazard for a wise Man

PASTORAL LETTER. 103

Man to run; a Warning, that the most hardened Infidel, in his thoughtful Hours, and in the Time of Sickness, Danger, or distress, is not able to resist.

THE Evidences of the Christian Religion are comprized under two general Heads, *External* and *Internal*. The *External* Evidences are those which prove it to be of Divine Authority, as, 'The Fulfilling of ancient Prophecies in Christ, 'The general Expectation of the Messiah at that Time, 'The Miracles wrought by Christ and his Apostles, 'His foretelling many Things which punctually came to pass, and, 'The wonderful Propagation of the Gospel after his Death. The *Internal* Evidences are, 'The Need there was of a Revelation from God to instruct and reform Mankind, 'The Fitness of the Gospel Revelation for that End, 'The Excellence of the Doctrines contained in it, and, 'The visible Tendency of the Whole to the Improvement and Perfection of human Nature, and the Happiness of Mankind, in this World and the next.

In this and my former Letter, I have laid before you the Evidences of both Sorts, to guard you against all the Attacks of Infidels, and to keep you stedfast in the Christian Faith; and I beseech you seriously to peruse what I have written for your Use, and to weigh the several Parts of it with Attention and Impartiality, as Matters of the utmost Consequence to you, and more especially necessary to be attended to in these Days, when the Cause of Infidelity is so openly espoused, and the Advocates for it are so industrious to gain
Profelytes

Profelytes. And that God will be pleased to give a Blessing to these Endeavours for your Spiritual Good, and dispose your Hearts to attend to the Means of your Salvation, and assist you in your Enquiries after the true Way to it, is, and shall be, the hearty Prayer of

Your Faithful Friend and Pastor,

Edm'. London'.

The



The Bishop of *London's*
Third Pastoral Letter, &c.

*Occasioned by the Suggestions of Infidels
against the Writings of the NEW
TESTAMENT, considered as a Di-
vine Rule of Faith and Manners.*



IN my two former Letters,
I have laid before you the
Evidences of the Christian
Religion, as drawn from the
Accounts which the Evan-
gelists give us of our Saviour
Christ, viz. 'The general
' *Expectation* of the Messiah
at that Time, arising from
the Prophecies concerning him ; ' The many and
great *Miracles* which he wrought, in Confirmation
of his Doctrine and Mission ; ' His *Predictions* of

' First Pastoral Letter, p. 24

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several

several very remarkable Events, which were afterwards punctually fulfilled; and, ‘The wonderful *Propagation* of the Gospel after his Death, against all the Powers of the World, and the Lusts, Passions, and Prejudices of Mankind. To these I have¹ added the Evidences of the great *Need* there was of such a Revelation from God; considering the gross Ignorance and Corruption of Manners into which the World was sunk, and the Inability of the Philosophers to enlighten and reform it. And this led me to lay before you the² *Excellency* of the Christian Institution for the effecting, what the Philosophers could not effect; ‘The great Advantage of a *Divine Authority*, to *ascertain* the Duties and Doctrines it lays down; ‘The *Purity* of its Precepts, so much higher and more perfect, than those which mere Morality prescribed; ‘The natural *Tendency* of them to fit and prepare the Soul for the spiritual Exercises of the next Life: ‘The *strict* Restraints which the Gospel lays upon irregular Enjoyments of all Kinds, not only in the *outward* Acts, but the *inward* Imaginations and Desires; ‘The *full Assurance* it gives of future Rewards and Punishments to *excite* us to Obedience, and the supernatural Assistance it promises, to *enable* us to obey; ‘The Peace and Satisfaction it affords the Minds, by discovering a *plain* and *certain* Method of obtaining the Pardon of Sin, and thereby securing the Love and favour of God; ‘The solid Foundation it lays for Ease and Comfort under all the Calamities of Life, and more especially for Patience, Resig-

¹ Second Pastoral Letter, p. 71. ² Second Pastoral Letter, p. 112.

nation and Constancy under Sufferings and Persecution *for Righteousness-Sake*; 'The Means it provides for preserving an habitual Sense of God and Religion upon the Minds of Men, by the Appointment of a Ministry, and Ordinances, and publick Assemblies for that End; and, upon the Whole, 'The Perfection and Happiness to which it advances human Nature, both in this Life, and the next, far beyond any Thing that the mere natural Powers of Body and Mind could have discovered and attained to.

And as a *Consequence* of the clear and undoubted Evidences of our Saviour's Mission and Authority, and of the Excellency of the Gospel Institution; I have further shewn¹ the indispensable Obligation we are under to *attend* to it, and *embrace* it; together with the Folly, Perverseness and Sinfulness of not embracing it, and much more of *despising* and *rejecting* it.

Since therefore both the *Evidences* and the *Excellency* of the Christian Institution, and of the whole Work of our Redemption by Jesus Christ, are so fully and clearly laid down in the² Writings of the *New Testament*, from whence I drew my Accounts of them; Infidelity can have no possible Refuge, but in a downright Disbelief of the *Truth* and *Authority* of those Writings; either as forged from the Beginning, or conveyed to us with great Corruptions, or as containing Facts related by Persons who had no Credit, and Doctrines delivered by those who had no Authority. This is the Refuge to which it was easily foreseen the Infidels of our Age must have their final Recourse, to justify

¹ Second Past. Lett. p. 136. ² Ibid. p. 112, 113.

their rejecting the Doctrine of our Redemption by Christ, and their avowed Disregard of the Writings of the *New Testament* further than as they contain such moral Precepts, as Natural Reason might suggest, and such as may in their Opinion be learnt as well, if not better, from Heathen Writers. As it is impossible to maintain that Scheme, on Supposition that those Writings are true and genuine, and that the Doctrines contained in them subsist upon a Divine Authority; the Patrons of it must of Necessity be driven to deny one or other of those Assertions, if not both. The *Consequence* on each Side is clear and undoubted: If the Writings of the *New Testament* be not authentick (*i. e.* either the Writings not genuine, or the Authority not divine) the Infidel-Scheme is well founded; but, on the other Hand, if they be authentick in both these Respects, Christianity stands unshaken and immoveable, and all Pretences, either that it is not well founded, or that it is no more than mere Morality, must fall to the Ground.

This is a Point which I *touch'd upon* in my first Pastoral Letter. But since that Time, the Patrons of Infidelity have told us openly and without Reserve, how little they consider the Scriptures as a Rule to Men, either of Belief or Practice. They plead for the Reading them with such ² *Freedom, as to assent or dissent, just as they judge it agrees or disagrees with the Light of Nature and the Reason of Things*; and commend those as the only wise men, who ³ *believe not the Doctrines, because contained in Scripture,* ⁴ *but the Scripture on*

¹ Page 22, 23, 24. ² Christianity as old as the Creation, p. 201. ³ — P. 371. ⁴ — P. 192.

Account of the Doctrines; who admit not any of its Doctrines without an Examination by that Rule; who¹ admit such Things for Divine Scripture, as [they being Judges] tend to the Honour of God and the Good of Men, and nothing else; and, who do not admit any Thing to be writ by Divine Inspiration, though it occurs ever so often in Scripture, till they are certain it will bear the Test they lay down. ² They insist further, how easily Mankind may be imposed on in the Point of Revelation; and how little Certainty there is or can be, that any Revelation has been conveyed entire to distant Times and Places; and they rest much upon the great Number ³ of various Readings in the Copies of the New Testament, as rendering it uncertain to us what the true Text was; and alledge, That ⁴ no Court of Judicature admits of a Copy, though taken from the Original, without Oath made by a disinterested Person, of his having compared it with the Original; from whence they conclude, how unreasonable it is absolutely to depend, in Things of the greatest Moment, on voluminous Writings, which have been so often transcribed by Men who never saw the Original.

These, and others of the like Tendency, are the Principles which the Infidels of our Age are openly and avowedly advancing; that by destroying the Credit of the Holy Scriptures, they may make Way for their own Scheme of Natural Religion. And there are also others amongst us, who though they do not dispute our receiving the *four Gospels* as a Rule of Faith and Practice, will not agree

¹ Christianity as old as the Creation, p. 328. ²—P. 185. ³—P. 284 324. ⁴—P. 324.

that the *other* Books of the *New Testament* have a Right to be considered as Part of that Rule ; but on the contrary, have taken great Pains to represent some of those Books as of doubtful Credit.

Since therefore those sacred Writings, as having all of them the Stamp of Divine Authority, are the great Charter of Christians, upon the *Validity* of which their Faith and their Hope are built ; to the End that those whom the Providence of God hath placed under my Care, may be armed in all Points against the Attempts of Infidelity and every Approach to it, I have judged it expedient to enter into that Matter more fully and distinctly, in order to give you a clear View of the Evidences both of the *Truth* and the *Authority* of those Writings. And this I consider, as in some Sort a *Duty* incumbent upon me. For having shewn you in my Second Letter the *Insufficiency* of Reason in this corrupt State to be your Guide in Matters of Religion, it may well be expected, that I also shew you what is a *sufficient* Guide, and where the Directions are to be found, which will acquaint you with the certain Way to Salvation, and upon which you may securely depend, as being the Guide which God himself has given you. And this will be effectually done, by making good the following Positions :

I. The four Gospels contain a *faithful* and *true* Account of the Birth, Life, Death, Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus Christ.

II. The whole Scheme of Christianity or the Gospel Dispensation, was not fully opened to the World by Christ himself immediately, in the Course of
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of his Ministry ; but many Things were left to be delivered or explained by his *Apostles*, whom he particularly Instructed and Commissioned for that End.

III. The Apostles, in vertue of their Commission from Christ, being not only to testify and deliver to the World the Things which they had seen and had been taught by him, but *further* to open and explain the Gospel Dispensation ; were *under the Guidance and Assistance of the Holy Ghost*, which they received, according to his Promise, before they entered upon their Ministry.

IV. What the Things are, relating to the Gospel Dispensation, which the Apostles were to open and explain, pursuant to the Commission and Instruction received from Christ, and under the Guidance and Assistance of the Holy Ghost ; must, in Conjunction with the Gospels, be learnt from their Preachings and Writings, as delivered to us in their *Acts* and *Epistles*.

V. The Books of the *New Testament*, in which the Doctrines delivered by Christ and his Apostles are contained, have been faithfully *transmitted* to the Christians of succeeding Ages.

VI. The Doctrines of the Apostles, contained in their *Epistles* and in the *Acts*, together with what is taught by our Saviour in the *Gospels*, were *designed* to be a standing Rule of *Faith* and *Manners* to Christians in all Ages, and were from the Beginning considered and received as such, by the Churches of Christ.

I. *The four Gospels contain a faithful and true Account of the Birth, Life, Death, Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus Christ.* When we would be satisfied concerning the Truth of any History, the two Things we chiefly enquire after, are, The Knowledge the Writer had of his Subject, and the Character he bore in Point of Integrity; the first, to convince us that he could not be imposed upon himself, and the second, that he had no Inclination or Design to impose upon others. Now, that there was such a Person as *Jesus of Nazareth*, who lived at the Time the Gospels speak of, and who made Choice of several Persons to be Disciples, are Facts, which the greatest Enemies of Christianity have never denied; and if they had denied them, they would have been effectually confuted by Writers of undoubted Credit, who lived at the Time, and in the Age which immediately followed. Of these Disciples in general, it is affirmed, and has never been denied or questioned, That they left their several Callings and Occupations, to the End they might be wholly at Liberty to attend Jesus, and receive his Instructions: ¹ *He ordained Twelve, that they should be with him; who, with others, accompanied him* ² *all the Time that he went in and out among them; beginning from the Baptism of John, unto the same Day that he was taken up from them: And having been* ³ *with him from the Beginning, they were well qualified to bear Witness of the Things that were done and spoken by him.* And what we find particularly declared by one, might be truly said by all of them, where-ever they preached. ⁴ *That which we have heard, which*

¹ Mark iii. 14.

² Acts i. 21.

³ John xv. 27.

⁴ 1 John i. 1.

we have seen with our Eyes, which we have looked upon, and our Hands have handled, declare we unto you. The Things they recorded as said and done by Christ, they heard from his own Mouth, and saw with their own Eyes, and did not deliver them upon the Report of others. Nor did they only see him, so as to have a *transient* View of him; but they *looked upon him*, and had long-continued Views of him, and conversed familiarly with him. And, that their Eyes might not be deceived, either with Regard to his Person or Miracles, they not only touched, but *handled*; their own Hands distributed the Loaves; and after his Resurrection, they were all directed, not only to ¹ *behold his Hands and Feet*, to satisfy them that it was he himself, but also to *handle* him, that they might be thoroughly convinced that he had Flesh and Bones, and so could not be a Spirit, as they at first suspected. And one of them, who was more distrustful than the rest, was commanded even to ² *thrust his Hand into the Wound in his Side.*

The same Persons who were thus prepared, by all *ordinary* and *natural* Qualifications, to give an Account of the Life and Actions of Christ, received also a *supernatural* Assistance for the Work, by his sending the Holy Ghost, for this among other Ends, *that he might bring all Things to their Remembrance, whatsoever he had said unto them.* And two of these, so enabled by all Helps, natural and supernatural, wrote two of the Gospels, namely, *Matthew* and *John*. As to *Mark* and *Luke*, the other two Evangelists, it is affirmed by some of the Antients, that they were two of the Seventy

¹ Luke xxiv. 39.

² John xx. 27.

Disciples, whom our Lord ¹ sent before his Face to every City and Place, whither he himself would come; to whom he gave Power to heal the Sick, and to cast out Devils; and said to them, as he had done to the twelve Apostles, *He that heareth you, heareth me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth me.* But however that be; after our Saviour's Ascension, we find them expressly mentioned as Fellow-Labourers with St. Paul, to whom the whole Gospel had been immediately revealed from Heaven, and one of them with St. Peter, whom Christ chose to be with him in the whole Course of his Ministry. St. Paul speaks of Mark as his ² Fellow-Labourer in the Gospel, whom we accordingly find with him when he wrote his Epistle to the Colossians and that to Philemon; and when he commands Timothy to come to him, he directs him ³ to take Mark and bring him with him, as one profitable to him in the Ministry. St. Peter mentions him in his first Epistle, as then with him, and also calls him ⁴ his Son; a Name which we find applied in the New Testament to those whom the Apostles had instructed in the Faith and converted, and to those who laboured with them in instructing and converting others; for in this Sense St. Paul says of ⁵ Timothy, *As a Son with the Father, he hath served with me in the Gospel;* and of Titus, ⁶ *Mine own Son after the common Faith.* Luke also is called by St. Paul his ⁷ Fellow-Labourer; whom we find accompanying him in

¹ Luke x. 1, 9, 16, 17. ² Col. iv. 10, 11. Philem. 24. ³ 2 Tim. iv. 11. ⁴ 1 Pet. v. 13. ⁵ Phil. ii. 22. ⁶ Tit. i. 4. ⁷ Col. iv. 14. 2 Tim. iv. 11. Philem. 24.

his Travels, and particularly to have been with him when he wrote his Epistles to the *Colossians*, to *Timothy*, and to *Philemon*.

Accordingly, the Accounts which the Antients give of those two Gospels and the Writers of them, are as follow. *Irenæus* says, ‘¹ That *Mark*, the Disciple and Interpreter of *Peter*, committed those Things to Writing which had been related to him by *Peter*; and that *Luke*, the Companion of *Paul*, recorded in a Book the Gospel which *Paul* preached.’ And elsewhere he says of St. *Luke*, ‘² That he was an inseparable Companion of St. *Paul*, and his Fellow-Labourer in the Gospel.’ *Tertullian* says, ‘³ That the Gospel which *Mark* published, is affirmed to be *Peter*’s, whose Interpreter he was, [as writing in *Greek* what he heard St. *Peter* deliver to the *Jews* in their own Language] and that which was drawn up by *Luke*, is ascribed to *Paul*.’ ⁴ *Eusebius* relates, upon the Authority of more ancient Writers, ‘That the Christians at *Rome* prevailed with *Mark* to set down in Writing the Doctrine which *Peter* had preached; and that afterwards *Peter* confirmed it, and authorised it to be publickly read in their Assemblies.’ And elsewhere, from *Origen*, ‘⁵ The second Gospel is that of *Mark*, who set it down as it was delivered to him by *Peter*; and the third, that of *Luke*, which is commended by St. *Paul*.’ To these we must add what the same ⁶ *Eusebius* says, as handed down by Tradition to his Time, ‘That St. *John* approved the three other Gospels, and gave his Testimony

¹ *Iren.* l. 3. c. 1.
tull. contra Marcion. l. 4. c. 5.

² *Iren.* l. 3. c. 14.

³ *Tert.*

⁴ *Euseb.* l. 2. c. 15.

⁵ *Ibid.* l. 6. c. 25.

⁶ *Ibid.* l. 3. c. 24.

to the Truth of them.' And, 'That Copies of these Holy Gospels were with great Zeal conveyed to remote Countries, by ² those who succeeded the Apostles in the Propagation of the Christian Faith:' And they were read in publick Assemblies, and received as the *Foundation* of that Faith, without the least Mark of Distinction in Point of *Authority*.

Thus stands the Evidence of the Truth of the Gospel History, with Regard to the exact Knowledge the Writers had of their Subject; which shews that they were not imposed upon themselves. And if it shall also appear that they were Persons of Integrity, and had no Inclination or Design to impose upon others, the Evidence is as complete, as can well be given of any ancient Facts whatsoever. With this View, let us consider, 'The Character and Condition of the Persons, and 'The Time and Manner of their Writing; with other Circumstances, from whence we may judge whether or no they are attended with any Marks or Suspicions of *Fraud* or *Design*.

So far were the Persons from being artful or designing Men, that they were reproached by the Enemies of Christianity, as rude and mean, simple and illiterate; and so far were they from having any worldly Views of Profit, or Pleasure, or Honour, after they set out on the Work of propagating the Gospel; that Persecution, Affliction, and Reproach, were almost the constant Attendants of the Propagators of it. As to the *Time*, they wrote and published their Gospels while the

¹ Euseb. l. 3. c. 37. ² Just. Mart. Apol. 2. Iren. l. 3. c. 11, 12.

Matters were fresh in Memory, and while many Persons were living, who wanted not Inclination to detect them, if they could have been convicted of Falshood. And as to their *Manner* of Writing, it is plain, open, and undisguised; free from all Appearance of Art or Contrivance, and carries in it this Signal Testimony of Truth and Impartiality, that they freely confess and record the Failings and Weaknesses of themselves and their Brethren, *viz.* The frequent Rebukes they received from their Master for their Ignorance and Slowness of Understanding; Their Views of temporal Power and Grandeur, during their Attendance upon him; and at last, Their shameful Denial and Desertion of him. If we consider the *Facts* contained in the Gospel-History, and the Tendency of them, they are such as overthrow the Religion both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and therefore could not escape the severest Scrutiny; and if we consider the *Numbers* who afterwards undertook to attest and publish those Facts, it is incredible that if they were not true, no one of them should be prevailed with, either by Hope or Fear, to discover the Imposture; and next to impossible to suppose, that all of them should submit to the severest Trials, and many of them to Death itself, rather than deny them.

These are the Evidences, that the Evangelists could not be deceived themselves, and that they had no Intention or Desire to deceive others. And we accordingly find all the four Gospels under the Names of the several Evangelists distinctly spoken of by the most early Writers of the Church, as the known and undoubted Records of our Saviour's Life and Actions, and as such, received
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by all Christian Churches, and read in their public Assemblies. ¹ *Clement*, the Disciple of St. Paul, cites many Passages out of them; and, in one Place, after having quoted the Prophecy of *Isaiah*, he adds, *and another Scripture saith*, and then quotes the Gospel of St. *Matthew*. In another Place, he cites the Gospel of St. *Luke*, with these words immediately prefixed, *The Lord saith in the Gospel*. ² *Polycarp*, a Disciple of St. *John*, mentions these four Gospels distinctly and by Name, with particular Circumstances relating to each; if some Fragments ascribed to him be genuine. ³ *Justin Martyr*, speaking of the Institution of the Lord's Supper, says, 'The Apostles in their *Records*, which are called Gospels, declared that it was commanded by Christ to be so performed; and a little after adds, 'That those Records were publicly read in the Christian Assemblies on the Lord's Day; and in ⁴ his other Works, he uses the same Style of the *Records of the Apostles*, and cites several Passages out of them, as the standing Records of the Church. ⁵ *Tatian*, the Disciple of *Justin*, reduced the four Gospels into one, which in After-ages was usually called the *Harmony of the Four Gospels*. ⁶ *Irenæus* gives this Account of all the Four, which hath already been taken Notice of in Part ⁷, ' *Matthew*, says he, 'delivered his Gospel to the *Hebrews*, while

¹ Clem. Ep. ad Cor. Ep. 2. S. 2. 8. of the Authority of which Epistle, see *Cotelerius*, p. 132. 149. 181.

² Grabe, Not. in Iren. p. 205. Bull. Defens. Fid. Nic. p. 52, 53. ³ Justin. Apol. 2. ⁴ Justin. Dial. Tryph. p. 327, 328, 329, 331, 332, 333, 334. ⁵ Euseb. l. 4. c. 29. Monotellaron. ⁶ Iren. l. 3. c. 1. ⁷ Pag. 155.

‘ *Peter* and *Paul* preached at *Rome*; after whose
 ‘ Departure, *Mark* the Disciple and Interpreter
 ‘ of *Peter*, conveyed to us in Writing the Things
 ‘ which *Peter* had preached; and *Luke*, the Com-
 ‘ panion of *Paul*, recorded in a Book the Gospel
 ‘ which *Paul* preached. Afterwards, *John* the
 ‘ Disciple of our Lord, who also leaned on his
 ‘ Breast at Supper, published his Gospel while he
 ‘ stayed at *Ephesus* in *Asia*.’ The same ¹ *Irenæus*,
 speaking of the Authority of the Gospels, says,
 ‘ That the very Hereticks gave their Testimony
 to them, while each laboured to support his Opi-
 nion from Them;’ and as to the Number, ‘ That
 they were neither more nor less than four, and
 that they who made them either more or fewer,
 were vain, ignorant, and presumptuous.’ ² *Cle-*
ment, speaking of a Passage cited out of the *Egyp-*
tian Gospel, says, It is not to be found in the
 four Gospels which have been delivered down to
 us. And ³ *Origen*, mentioning the Writers of the
 four Gospels by Name, and in their Order, says,
 ‘ That these alone (and no other Gospels) had
 been universally received in the Church.

The faithful *Transmission* of the Gospels to fu-
 ture Ages, is a Point that will fall properly under
 the fifth general Head; and therefore I will shut
 up this first Head, after I have shewn in a few
 Words, that several of the Facts related in the
 Gospels, receive Confirmation from the Testi-
 mony of other Historians, both *Jewish* and *Pa-*
gan, who lived at or near the Time. I have ob-
 served before, that it has never been denied by the

¹ *Iren.* l. 3. c. 11. ² *Clem. Alex. Strom.* l. 3.

³ *Orig. Com. in Matth.* p. 203.

Writers of either Sort, that there was such a Person as *Jesus*, who lived in *Judæa*, and suffered Death upon the Cross, at the Time mentioned in the Gospels. The ¹ Name which the *Jews* have given him with reference to his *Crucifixion* (however reproachfully intended) is an acknowledgment of the Truth of the Fact; for which, and for other Particulars relating to him, the Christians appealed to the ² Accounts transmitted to *Rome*; according to the known Usage of the Governors making Returns thither, of the Transactions in their respective Provinces. All these Things concerning Christ, says ³ *Tertullian*, were reported by *Pilate* to *Tiberius Cæsar*. The same is attested by ⁴ *Tacitus*, a *Roman* Historian of undoubted Credit; who speaking of the Christians, says, 'They take the Name of *Christ*, who was put to Death in the Time of the Emperor *Tiberius*, by *Pontius Pilate*.' Nor did *Julian* himself, the bitterest Enemy that Christianity ever had, deny that there was such a Person, or affirm that there was no Foundation for the Truth of the Gospel History. On the contrary, he owns the ⁵ Gospels to have been written by the Persons whose Names they bear, and only blames them for magnifying the Works of their Master beyond Measure, the Truth and Reality of which Works ⁶ *Celsus* also does in Effect acknowledge, when he ascribes them to Art Magick. Defences, which neither of these would have had Recourse to, if

¹ The Person hanged. ² Justin Apol. 1. Acta Pilati. ³ Tertull. Apol. ⁴ Tacit. Annal. l. 15. c. 44. ⁵ Cyril. lib. 6 & 10. ⁶ First Past. Lett. p. 31.

they could have proved that the Books themselves were spurious ; nor would they have omitted to take the Advantage even of a *Suspicion* of their being spurious, but that they knew there was no Foundation for it.

There are many other Facts which the Evangelists relate, that are also attested both by Heathen and Jewish Writers. The Gospels frequently mention the Warnings which Christ gave his Disciples and Followers, that they must reckon upon a State of great Trials and Sufferings for the Sake of his Religion ; and ¹ *Tacitus*, *Suetonius* and *Pliny* are Witnesses, how very terrible those Persecutions were. The Evangelists mention the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, as foretold by our Saviour ; and the Account given of the Destruction by ² *Josephus* the Jewish Historian, which exactly corresponds with what they relate from the Mouth of Christ, is a Testimony to the Truth of that Relation. As the same *Josephus* has also confirmed the Truth of the Gospel History in general, by the Accounts he gives of the ³ *Roman* Governors, and the Jewish Oeconomy at that Time ; being agreeable, both as to Persons and Things, with the Accounts which the Evangelists give us of them.

II. *The whole Scheme of Christianity, or the Gospel-Dispensation, was not fully opened to the World by Christ himself immediately, in the Course of his Ministry ; but many Things were left by him*

¹ Tacit. Nero. Sueton. Nero. Plin. Ep. lib. 10.

² First Past. Lett. p. 39. ³ Pilate, Felix, Festus, &c. Sanhedrim, &c.

to be delivered or explained by his Apostles, whom he particularly instructed, and commissioned, for that End. The Office of John the Baptist was only to give Notice, that the Kingdom of Heaven, or of God, *i. e.* of the Messiah, was *at hand*, and to summon Men to Repentance as a necessary Qualification to be admitted Members of that Kingdom, and *to escape the Wrath to come.* ¹ *Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand.* The like Commission was given by Christ to the Twelve Apostles, when he first sent them forth; ² *As ye go, preach, saying, the Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand;* and to the Seventy Disciples, when he sent them two and two before his Face into every City and Place whither he himself would come; ³ *Say unto them the Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.* In like Manner, Jesus himself ⁴ *went about all the Cities and Villages, teaching in their Synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom,* or the good News of the Coming of the Messiah. But he was so far from openly proclaiming or owning himself to be the *Messiah*, that he industriously concealed it, lest the *Jews*, who expected a temporal Deliverer from the *Roman Yoke*, should break out into Rebellion, and make him obnoxious to the *Roman Power* before the Completion of his Ministry. When ⁵ *Peter*, in the Name of the Disciples, had declared to him their full Conviction, *That he was Christ the Son of the living God;* the Charge he immediately gave them, was, *That they should tell no Man, that he was Jesus the Christ.* When the

¹ Matt. iii. 2.² Matt. x. 7.³ Luke x. 9.⁴ Matt. ix. 35.⁵ Matt. xvi. 16, 20.

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unclean Spirits fell down before him, and cried, saying, ¹ *Thou art the Son of God*, (a known Appellation of the *Messiah* among the *Jews*) it immediately follows, That *Jesus strictly charged them, that they should not make him known*. After his Transfiguration upon the Mount, and a Voice from Heaven declaring him to be ² *the Son of God*; *Jesus charges the three Disciples who were with him, That they should tell the Vision to no Man, until the Son of Man was risen again from the Dead*. Nor did he ever make a publick Profession and Acknowledgment that he was the *Messiah*, till he was arraigned, first before the ³ Council of the *Jews*, and then before *Pontius Pilate*, i. e. after he had finished his Ministry upon Earth, and there was no Danger either that the People would raise a *Sedition* upon his Account; or that he should be arraigned and put to Death before the appointed Time. But with regard to *the People*, the great Aim and Design of his Ministry was, first to convince them by his Miracles that he was a *Prophet* sent from God; which being joined to the general Expectation of the *Messiah* at that Time, might lead them to *suppose* that he was the Person; and then, to *prepare* them for the Reception of the Gospel, by taking off the carnal and corrupt Glosses which the Scribes and Pharisees had put upon the Moral Law, and by laying open the Pride, Covetousness and Hypocrisy of those Teachers: And this, in order to convince the People, how unfit they were to be Guides in Re-

¹ Mark iii. 11, 12. Luke iv. 41. ² Matt. xvii. 9. ³ Mark xiv. 62. Luke xxii. 70. John xviii.

ligion; and by that Means to set them at Liberty from the Influence and Authority of Persons, whose Interest it was, and whose Endeavour it would be, to give all the Opposition they could to the Gospel, that they might preserve and maintain their own Power. But what he said to the *People* concerning the Kingdom of Heaven or the Gospel-State, and the Nature and future Progress of it, was for the most Part delivered in ¹ Parables; which he explained to his Disciples ² when they were alone, to let them by Degrees into some Understanding of the Nature and Design of that Spiritual Kingdom which he intended to establish; reserving the *complete* and *perfect* Discovery thereof, till he had finished the great Work of our Redemption by his Resurrection from the Dead, and had fully prepared them for the Publication of the Gospel, by sending the Holy Ghost to instruct and strengthen them. For we find, in the Course of our Saviour's Ministry, that notwithstanding the Lights he occasionally gave them, their Knowledge of these Things was very imperfect. He often complains of the *Slowness* of their ³ Understanding, in that they did not apprehend the Design of his Parables, nor arrive at a firm and stedfast Faith in him, by the frequent ⁴ Opportunities they had of hearing his Doctrine and seeing his Miracles. When he first ⁵ *began to shew them, that he must go unto Jerusalem and suffer many Things of the Elders and Chief Priests and Scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the*

¹ Mat. xiii. 34. Mark iv. 11.

² Mark iv. 34.

³ Matt. xv. 16. Mark vii. 18.

⁴ Matt. xvi. 8. 11.

Mark viii. 14, 17, 21. ⁵ Matt. xvi. 21, 22, 23.

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Third Day; Peter, who had before made so full a Confession of his Belief, that he was the Messiah, began to rebuke him for these Sayings, Be it far from thee, Lord, This shall not be unto thee. Upon which our Lord told him, that he savoured not the Things that be of God, but those that be of Men. And on a like Occasion St. Luke says, That they understood none of these Things, and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the Things which were spoken. When the ² Samaritans would not receive him in his Way to Jerusalem, two other of his Disciples, James and John, who, together with Peter, were most conversant with him, desired Leave to command Fire to come down from Heaven, and consume them, as Elias had done in a like Case; and they received this Rebuke from him, Ye know not what Manner of Spirit ye are of, (i. e. how different the Spirit of the Gospel is from that of the Law) for the Son of Man is not come to destroy Men's Lives, but to save them. In the whole Course of his Ministry, they evidently reckoned upon his setting up a temporal Kingdom, and had ³ Strifes among themselves which of them should then be the greatest; and even after his Resurrection, the Question they ask him upon that Head is, ⁴ Whether he will at this Time restore the Kingdom to Israel. All which, together with the Acts of forsaking and denying him, the Difficulty they shewed in believing his Resurrection, and that Slowness of Heart with which he upbraided them for not

¹ Luke xviii. 34. ² Luke ix. 54. ³ Matt. xviii. 1. Matt. xx. 20, 24. Luke xxii. 24. ⁴ Acts. i. 6.

¹ applying the Prophecies concerning him even after he had suffered and was risen from the Dead ; are undeniable Testimonies, how imperfect Notions they had as yet of the Nature and Oeconomy of the Gospel-State, and how great Need there was of those further Instructions which he gave them during the *Forty Days*, in which he was ² *seen of them after his Resurrection, and spake of the Things pertaining to the Kingdom of God*; and this, evidently, in order to qualify them for the due Discharge of the Commission they received from him immediately before his Ascension into Heaven, ³ *Go ye, and teach all Nations—*
⁴ *Go into all the World, and preach the Gospel to every Creature, teaching them to observe all Things whatsoever I have commanded you.*

III. *The Apostles, in vertue of their Commission from Christ, being not only to testify and deliver to the World the Things which they had seen and had been taught by Him, but further to open and explain the Gospel Dispensation ; were under the Guidance and Assistance of the Holy Ghost, which they received according to his Promise, before they entered upon their Ministry.*

The frequent Assurances they had from our Saviour, that they should receive the Holy Ghost, are distinctly recorded in the four Evangelists ; the Truth and Authority of whose Writings is fully shewn under the first Head. But because the Proof of their having this, and several other Promises of our Saviour, punctually fulfilled to them,

¹ Luke xxiv. 25. ² Acts i. 3. ³ Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. ⁴ Mark xvi. 15.

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do all depend upon Testimonies fetched from the *Acts of the Apostles*; it will be proper in this Place to establish the Credit of that History, in the same Manner that the Credit of the four Evangelists has been already established. And that the Writer of it was *Luke* the Evangelist, appears evidently by comparing the Introduction to his Gospel with that of the *Acts*. The Gospel begins thus: ¹ *Forasmuch as many have taken in Hand to set forth in Order a Declaration of those Things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the Beginning were Eye-Witnesses and Ministers of the Word: It seemed good to me also, having had perfect Understanding of all Things from the very first, to write unto thee in Order, most excellent Theophilus.* With Express Reference to this, the *Acts of the Apostles* begin thus: ² *The former Treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the Day in which he was taken up, &c.* After this, by a visible Connection of the History, he proceeds to relate what the Apostles did, immediately after our Saviour's Ascension; so that no Doubt has ever been made, but that the same Person was the Writer of both. That he was well qualified to write his Gospel, has been already shewn under the first Head; and the Evidences there laid down, conclude yet more strongly for the Authority of the ³ *Acts of the Apostles*; of many of which Acts, we are sure, he himself was an Eye and Ear-Witness. Citations out of this Book are found in ⁴ *Clement* the

¹ Luke i. 1.

² Acts i. 1.

³ Acts xvi, &c.

⁴ Clem. Ep. ad Corinth. S. 18.

Companion of St. Paul, and in ¹ *Polycarp*, the Disciple of St. John. ² *Irenæus*, in the second Century, writing against the heretical Doctrine of two Principles, (one Good, the other Evil) argues throughout one whole Chapter, from Passages taken at large out of the Book of *Acts*, to shew the Contrariety of that Heresy to the Doctrine of the Apostles. ³ *Eusebius* gives an Account of the same Book as follows: ' Luke, a Native of Antioch, and a Physician by Profession, who had lived long and intimately with Paul, and was much conversant with the other Apostles, left two Books, written by Divine Inspiration; one of them, his Gospel—the other entitled, The Acts of the Apostles; which he did not write from the Relations of others, but as Facts which he saw with his own Eyes.' And ⁴ elsewhere, among the Books which were universally received, he reckons the *Acts of the Apostles* next to the four Evangelists.

Having established the Credit and Authority of those Writings which testify the Promise of the Holy Ghost, and the Mission thereof according to that Promise; I will now proceed to shew from the Evangelists, upon what Occasions and for what Ends the promise was made. Our Saviour tells his Disciples, a little before his Death, ⁵ *I have yet many Things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now*; and then he immediately adds, *Howbeit, when he the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all Truth*: Agreeably to what

¹ Polycarp. ad Philip. S. 1.

² Iren. 1. 3. c. 12.

³ Euseb. 1. 3. c. 4.

⁴ Euseb. 1. 3. c. 25.

⁵ John xvi. 12, 13.

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he had told them a little before ¹ *These Things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you : But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my Name, he shall teach you all Things, and bring all Things to your Remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.* Again, ² *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth : And, ³ When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.* When he tells them, they must be brought into the Synagogues, and unto Magistrates and Powers, he ⁴ *bids them take no Thought how or what Thing they shall answer, or what they shall say ; and then adds, For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same Hour what ye ought to say : And ⁵ I will give you a Mouth and Wisdom, which all your Adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.* When he sees them in Trouble, and finds that sorrow had filled their Hearts at the Thoughts of his leaving them, he comforts them thus : ⁶ *I tell you the Truth, it is expedient for you that I go away ; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart I will send him unto you.* When he had given them their Commission to preach the Gospel unto all Nations, he immediately adds, ⁷ *And behold I send the Promise of my Father upon you ; ⁸ but tarry ye in the City of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with Power from on*

¹ John xiv. 25, 26. ² John xiv. 16, 17. ³ John xv. 26. ⁴ Luke xii. 11, 12. ⁵ Luke xxi. 15. ⁶ John xvi. 7. ⁷ Luke xxiv. 49. ⁸ Acts i. 4.

High : And, ¹ Ye shall receive Power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you ; and ye shall be Witnesses unto Me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost Part of the Earth. This promise was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost, when they were with one Accord in one Place, and ² suddenly there came a Sound from Heaven, as of a rushing mighty Wind, and filled all the House where they were sitting : And there appeared unto them cloven Tongues, like as of Fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other Tongues, as the Spirit gave them Utterance. And there being at that Time devout Men out of every Nation, who were come to Jerusalem to worship, every one heard them speak in his own Language wherein he was born. And while the people stand amazed at this, St. Peter tells them, That ³ Jesus, whom they had crucified, being raised from the Dead, and by the right Hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the Promise of the Holy Ghost, had shed forth that which they now saw and heard.

It appears by these Accounts, that the full and final Opening of the Gospel-Dispensation, was to be the Work of the Holy Ghost, directing the Apostles, and strengthening them in their Ministry, and enabling them by his Gifts to convey the Knowledge of it to all Nations, and to confirm it with undoubted Testimonies of a divine Commission and Authority. Whatever they had heard from Christ, or seen him do, the Holy Ghost brought fresh again to their Remembrance ;

¹ Acts i. 8.
ii. 33.

² Acts ii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 7.

³ Acts

the Truths which they could not bear in their more imperfect State, the Holy Ghost instructed them in, and made them fully apprehend; and *by leading them into all Truth*, he effectually secured them against *all Error*. They were to preach the Gospel to *all Nations*, and he taught them the Languages of *all*. In the course of their Ministry, they were to meet with great Trouble, Difficulty, and Persecution; and he inspired and supported them with suitable Supplies of Wisdom, Courage and Comfort. Thus encouraged, strengthened, and assisted, by the Holy Ghost, the Apostles ¹ *went forth and preached every where; the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with Signs following*; or, as it is elsewhere expressed, ² *God beareth them Witness, both with Signs and Wonders, and with divers Miracles, and Gifts of the Holy Ghost*. This is affirmed on many Occasions; first of all the Apostles in general, while they continued together at *Jerusalem*, That ³ *many Wonders and Signs were done by their Hands*.—That ⁴ *with great Power they gave Witness to the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus*.—That ⁵ *by the Hands of the Apostles were many Signs and Wonders wrought among the People*: — That ⁶ *there came a Multitude out of the Cities round about Jerusalem, bringing sick Folks, and them which were vexed with unclean Spirits, and they were healed every one*: And then, as wrought by particular Apostles; by ⁷ *Peter*, in the extraordinary Act of Power exercised upon *Ananias and Sapphira* for

¹ Mark xvi. 20.

² Heb. ii. 4.

³ Acts ii. 43.

⁴ Acts iv. 33.

⁵ Acts v. 12.

⁶ Acts v. 16.

⁷ Acts v. 5, 10.

lying to the Holy Ghost; by ¹ Peter and John, who upon the Occasion of curing a Man that was lame from his Mother's womb, declared by what *Power* they and the other Apostles effected their miraculous Cures; *In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk*; And ² *Be it known unto you, and to all the People of Israel, that by the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the Dead, by him doth this Man stand here before you whole*: And St. Peter (upon his curing Æneas of the Palsy) ³ *Æneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole*.

Nor had the Apostles only the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, and of Tongues and Miracles, bestowed upon *them*, but these Powers were also by their ministry conferred upon *others*. Our Saviour intimated, that *Believers* should receive Gifts of an extraordinary Nature; for St. John repeating what he had said concerning ⁴ *Rivers of Water that should flow out of him*, adds, *This spake he of the Spirit which they that believe on him should receive*; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified: and so our Saviour himself, ⁵ *Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the Works that I do shall he do also, and greater Works than these; because I go unto my Father*. And it is certain in Fact, that by Prayer, and laying on of Hands, the Gifts of the Holy Ghost were bestowed by the Apostles upon many of the Believers. After Peter and John had related to the Brethren at Jerusalem, the

¹ Acts iii. 6. Acts viii. 6, 7, 13.—ix. 32, 35, 39.
² Acts iv. 10. ³ Acts ix. 34, ⁴ John vii.
⁵ John xiv. 12.

Threatnings of the High Priests and Council of the Jews, it follows, ¹ *And now, Lord, behold their Threatnings, and grant unto thy Servants, that with all Boldness they may speak thy Word, by stretching forth thy Hand to heal, and that Signs and Wonders may be done by the Name of thy holy Child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the Place was shaken where they were assembled, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. Again, when the Apostles which were at ² Jerusalem, heard that Samaria had received the word of God, (by the Preaching of Philip the Evangelist) they sent unto them Peter and John, who when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost; then laid they their Hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. While Peter was speaking to Cornelius and his Company, ³ The Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the Word, and they heard them speak with Tongues, and magnify God. To these we may add the instances of Stephen and Philip, two of the seven Deacons; of the first of whom it is said, that ⁴ he did great Wonders and Miracles among the People; and of the second, that ⁵ Simon Magus himself wondered when he heard unclean Spirits crying with loud Voices, and saw those who were possessed with them cured, and many taken with Palsies, and that were lame, healed.*

There is one Thing further observable, concerning the Miracles wrought by the Apostles and others, in Testimony of their Divine Mission;

¹ Acts iv. 29, 30. 31. ² Acts viii. 14, 15, 17.
³ Acts x. 44, 46. ⁴ Acts vi. 8. ⁵ Acts viii.
7, 19,

and that is, The numerous Conversions to the Christian Faith which were made by them. Upon hearing the Apostles speak all Sorts of Tongues on the Day of Pentecost, ¹ *there were added to them above three Thousand Souls*: Upon the Cure of the lame Man by Peter and John, and the Occasion they took from thence to recommend and enforce the Doctrine of the Gospel, *many of them which heard the word believed*, ² *and the Number of the Men was about five Thousand*: Upon the many Signs and Wonders which were wrought by the Apostles among the People, ³ *Believers were the more added to the Lord, Multitudes both of Men and Women*: Upon Philip's preaching the Gospel at Samaria, ⁴ *the People with one Accord gave heed unto those things which he spake; hearing and seeing the Miracles which he did*; and even ⁵ *Simon, he who had bewitched them with his Sorceries, and to whom they had given all Heed, from the highest to the lowest, as the great Power of God, was baptized, and continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the Miracles and Signs which were done.*

Thus far, of the Apostles and Disciples of our Lord; of the Commission they had from him to preach the Gospel, and their Qualifications for the effectual Discharge of that Commission, by the Instructions they received from his own Mouth, by the further Lights which the Holy Ghost gave them, and by the Gift of Tongues and the Power of Miracles, to enable them to *propagate and establish* the Truths they preached.

¹ Aët. ii. 41.

² Aët. iv. 4.

³ Aët. v. 12, 14.

⁴ Aët. viii. 6. ⁵ Aët. viii. 9, 10, 13.

But as St. Paul also was a glorious Instrument in carrying on that great Work, and both his *Commission* and *Instructions* were conveyed in a Method different from the rest, it will be necessary to give a particular Account of both, in order to lay a sure Foundation for the Authority of the several Epistles written by him. The Account of his miraculous Conversion is delivered by ¹ St. Luke in the *Acts of the Apostles*, and by himself in the same Book, in his two Defences before *Lysias* and *Festus*, first at *Jerusalem*, and then at *Cæsarea*. And his immediate Mission from Christ is thus expressed, ² *I have appeared unto thee for this Purpose, to make thee a Minister and a Witness both of these Things which thou hast seen, and of those Things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the People, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I now send thee, to open their Eyes, and to turn them from Darkness to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God.* And so, *Ananias*, to whom he was directed by the Heavenly Vision, relates what Christ had revealed to him concerning Paul; ³ *He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my Name before the Gentiles, and Kings, and the Children of Israel:* And, ⁴ *The Lord, even Jesus that appeared unto thee in the Way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy Sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.* And again, ⁵ *The God of our Fathers have chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his Will, and see that Just one, and shouldest hear the Voice of his Mouth: For thou*

¹ Acts ix. 3.—xxii. 3.—xxvi. 12. ² Acts xxvi. 16, 17, 18. Acts xxii. 21. ³ Acts ix. 15. ⁴ Acts ix. 17. ⁵ Acts xxii. 14, 15.

shalt be his Witness unto all Men, of what thou hast seen and heard. And whereas the other Apostles style themselves, in the Beginning of their Epistles, the Servants and the Apostles of Christ, St. Paul's Style concerning himself is, ¹ Called to be an Apostle,—Separated unto the Gospel of God; and, ² An Apostle not of Man, neither by Man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father. And as to his Doctrine, he tells the Corinthians, on Occasion of his speaking of the Institution of the last Supper, ³ I have received of the Lord that which I also delivered unto you; and speaking of the Death and Resurrection of Christ, ⁴ I delivered unto you that which I also received; and of his Doctrine in General, ⁵ The Gospel which was preached of me, was not after Man; for I neither received it of Man, neither was I taught it, but by the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

To this Account of his Mission and Doctrine, we must add, that both were justified and confirmed by many and great Miracles. It is said of Paul and Barnabas when at Iconium, ⁶ Long Time therefore abode they, speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave Testimony to the Word of his Grace, and granted Signs and Wonders to be done by their Hands; and at Ephesus, ⁷ God wrought special Miracles by the Hands of Paul; so that from his Body were brought unto the Sick, Handkerchiefs or Aprons, and the Diseases departed from them, and the evil Spirits went out of them. In Cyprus, an Act of Extraordinary Power was ex-

¹ Rom. i. 1. ¹ Cor. i. 1. ² Cor. i. 1. Eph. i. 1.
 Colof. i. 1. ² Tim. i. 1. ² Gal. i. 1. ³ 1 Cor.
 xi. 23. ⁴ 1 Cor. xv. 3. ⁵ Gal. i. 11, 12.
⁶ Acts xiv. 3. ⁷ Acts xix. 11, 12.

exercised on *Elymas* the Sorcerer, whom *Paul*, moved by the Holy Ghost, struck with ¹ *Blindness* for endeavouring to turn away the Deputy from the Faith. At *Lystra*, ² he commanded the *Lame Man* to stand upright on his Feet, and he leaped and walked. At *Philippi*, where was a Damsel possessed with a Spirit of Divination, *Paul* said to the Spirit, ³ *I command thee in the Name of Jesus Christ to come out of her, and he came out the same Hour*. In *Melita*, the Father of the chief Man of the Island lay sick of a Fever and Bloody Flux; ⁴ *To whom Paul entered in, and laid his Hands on him and healed him*: And, when this was done, others also, who had Diseases in the Island, came and were healed. And for the Success of his Ministry, thus supported and enforced by the Testimony of Miracles, we may appeal, not only to the particular Conversions mentioned in the ⁵ Acts of the Apostles as the Effects of them, but to the Number of Churches which were founded by him; many of them in some of the most populous Cities and Countries.

One Thing more I must observe, That as the rest of the Apostles had the Power of conferring the Gifts of the Holy Ghost upon others, so *Paul* had the same Power: For it is said of the Converts to Christianity whom he found at *Ephesus*, ⁶ *That when he had laid his Hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with Tongues, and prophesied*.

¹ Acts xiii. 10. 11. ² Acts xiv. 8. ³ Acts xvi. 18. ⁴ Acts xxviii. 8, 9. ⁵ Acts xiii. 12. —xiv. 14. —xvi. 33. ⁶ Acts xix. 6.

IV. *What the Things are relating to the Gospel Dispensation, which the Apostles were to open and explain, pursuant to the Commission and Instruction received from Christ, and under the Guidance and Assistance of the Holy Ghost, must, in Conjunction with the Gospels, be learnt from their Preaching and Writings, as delivered to us in their Acts and Epistles.* Some of the Doctrines, which they were charged by Christ to deliver to the World, are recorded in the Four Gospels, as being Part of the Instructions they received from himself; but as it is very certain that *all* the Instructions which he delivered to his Disciples are not recorded in the Gospels; so it is no less certain, that many of the Things which he did deliver to them during the Course of his Ministry, were delivered in an obscure Manner, and not understood by them at the Time; particularly, those relating to the Nature of his Kingdom, his Death, and his Resurrection. His ordinary Way of teaching the People, was by Parables. ¹ *All these Things spake Jesus to the Multitude in Parables, and without a Parable spake he not unto them; —* ² *With many such Parables spake he the Word unto them, as they were able to hear it; but without a Parable spake he not unto them.* 'Tis added, indeed, that *when they were alone, he expounded all Things to his Disciples*; but they so little understood them, that, ³ as I observed before, he often upbraids them with their slowness of Apprehension and want of Faith; and, of those Expositions, but few are re-

¹ Matt. xiii. 34.² Mark iv. 33, 34.³ Page

corded, A little before his Death he tells them,
¹ *I have yet many Things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now*; and then immediately adds,
Howbeit when the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all Truth; where he evidently leaves the many Things he had to say, which they could not then bear, to be revealed to them by the Holy Ghost, who was also to bring to their Remembrance all that he himself had delivered to them. After his Resurrection, he was seen of the Apostles:
² *forty Days, speaking of the Things pertaining to the Kingdom of God*; but what the Things were that he delivered to them in those forty Days, is no where recorded. Nor indeed could the great Work of the Redemption of Mankind, which mainly depended upon his *dying and rising again*, be set forth and explained, till *after* his Resurrection; when, upon Occasion of their Doubts concerning the Reality of it, he shewed them out of
³ *Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms*, that he was to suffer and rise again, and *opened their Understandings that they might understand the Scriptures*. I will only add as to St. Paul, that the same Doctrines which were conveyed to the other Apostles, first by the Teaching of Christ, and then by the Light and Direction of the ⁴ Holy Ghost, were fully made known to him by immediate Revelation.

The Apostles being thus instructed in the whole Will of Christ, were properly his *Messengers*, to convey and deliver it to the World, (⁵ *As my Father*

¹ John xvi. 12, 13. ² Acts ii. 3. ³ Luke xxiv. 27, 44, 45. ⁴ See before, p. 175. ⁵ John xx. 21.

bath sent me, so send I you — ¹ Go ye unto all the World, and preach the Gospel to every Creature — ² Teaching them to observe all Things whatsoever I have commanded you. And from whom ² we are to learn the Will of Christ, but from his own Messengers, whom he fully instructed in it, and intrusted with the Delivering it to the World? They were the Ambassadors of Christ ³ to pray us in his Stead to be reconciled to God; and from whom therefore, but from them, are we to learn the Terms of that Reconciliation, and the Grounds of that great Favour and Mercy extended by God to Mankind? They were in a particular Manner appointed to be Witnesses of his ⁴ Resurrection; and from what other Hands, but these that were intrusted with publishing the Doctrines of the Resurrection, can we learn the Importance of it, and the Benefits accruing to Mankind by it? Those Ambassadors and Messengers were endowed with the Power of working Miracles; and for what End should this be, but to prove the Divinity of their Commission, and to recommend their Doctrines to our Attention and Belief? In general, the Apostles were appointed by Christ to be ⁵ the Light of the World; and how was that Light to be conveyed to future Generations, otherwise than by their Preachings and Writings?

Supposing then that the Writings of the Apostles, and the Accounts we have of their Preaching, are true and genuine, *i. e.* that they were really writ-

¹ Mark xvi. 15.

² Matt. xxviii. 20.

³ 2 Cor.

v. 20.

⁴ Acts i. 22. — v. 32. — x. 41.

⁵ Matt.

v. 14.

ten by the Persons whose Names they bear; no Doubt can remain, but that the Things relating to the Gospel Dispensation (which were to be opened and explained by them, pursuant to the Instructions received from Christ, and under the Direction of the Holy Ghost) are to be learnt from their Acts and Epistles, in Conjunction with the four Gospels. The Authority of the *Gospels* and the *Acts of the Apostles* I have already established, and shall now proceed to shew, that the **EPISTLES** also were the genuine Writings of the Apostles.

¹ *Eusebius* reckoning up the Books of the New Testament which was *universally* received, after Mention made of the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, adds, ‘*Next to these we are to reckon the Epistles of Paul;*’ every one of which (except that to the *Hebrews*) expressly bears his Name; and they are frequently cited and referred to by the most early Writers of the Church, as has been abundantly shewn by many learned Men, and may easily be seen by looking into the Writings of *Clement*, *Ignatius* and *Polycarp* in the first and second Centuries, and after them, into those of *Irenæus* and *Tertullian*. The same Thing is there affirmed by *Eusebius*, of the first Epistle of *St. Peter*, and the first of *St. John*, namely, that they had been received universally. And as to the Doubts that have been raised concerning other Epistles; it must be premised in general, that no Advantage can accrue from thence to the Adversaries of the Christian Religion, till they point out the particular Doctrines relating to Faith or Manners, which are contained in those, that are not also contained ei-

¹ *Euseb.* l. 3. c. 25.

ther expressly, or by fair and clear Deduction, in the other Books of the New Testament, which the Church of Christ has universally received. Much less can they reap any Advantage from those Doubts, if it shall be made appear that in every Instance they are ill founded.

As to the Epistle to the HEBREWS; the main Doubt concerning it has arisen from its not being expressly under the Name of St. Paul, as all his other Epistles are; but this receives a very plain and natural Solution. St. Paul was properly the Apostle of the Gentiles, as appears from many Passages both in the Book of Acts, and in his own Epistles. The Direction he received from Christ was this, *1 Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem, for they will not receive thy Testimony concerning me; and Depart, for I will send thee far hence to the Gentiles.* In his Epistles he speaks of himself as the *2 Apostle of the Gentiles*, as the *3 Minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles*; and as the *Prisoner of Jesus Christ for the Gentiles*; as he, *4 to whom it pleased God to reveal his Son, that he might preach him among the Heathen*; he *5 to whom this Grace or Commission was given that he should preach among the Gentiles*; he, *6 who was appointed a Teacher of the Gentiles*; he, *7 whom the Lord strengthened, that by him the Preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear.* All which are briefly comprehended in the Declaration he made to the Galatians; *8 The Gospel of the Uncircumcision was committed unto me, as*

¹ Acts xxii. 18, 21.

² Rom. xi. 13.

³ — xv.

16. ⁴ Gal. i. 16.

⁵ Ephes. iii. 8.

⁶ 2 Tim.

i. 11. ⁷ 2 Tim. iv. 17.

⁸ Gal. ii. 7.

the Gospel of the Circumcision was unto Peter; for he that wrought effectually in Peter to the Apostleship of the Circumcision, the same was mighty in me towards the Gentiles. 'Tis true, the Apostolical Commission was general, ' To preach the Gospel,' and there are many Instances of St. Paul's endeavouring to convert those of the Jewish Nation, and of his going into their Synagogues, and reasoning with them. This he did at ¹ Salamis, at ² Iconium, at ³ Thessalonica, at ⁴ Berea, at ⁵ Corinth, and at ⁶ Ephesus. At Thessalonica, particularly, it is said that Paul, as his Manner was, went in unto them, and three Sabbath Days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures: At Ephesus he ⁷ went into the Synagogue, and spake boldly for the Space of three Months, disputing and persuading the Things concerning the Kingdom of God: And he tells the Elders of the Church, ⁸ That he had testified both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, Repentance towards God, and Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. And at ⁹ Antioch, where the Jews contradicted and blasphemed, he tells them, It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to them; but seeing they put it from them, and judged themselves unworthy of everlasting Life, he turned to the Gentiles. And to how great a Height the Prejudices of the Jews against him had risen by Degrees, we may gather from the furious Assault that was made upon him at Jerusalem, and their crying out, ¹⁰ Men of Israel, help; this is the

¹ Acts xiii. 5. —xiii. 16. ² —xiv. 1. ³ —xvii. 1. ⁴ —xvii. 10. ⁵ —xviii. 4. ⁶ —xviii. 19. ⁷ —xix. 8. ⁸ —xx. 21. ⁹ —xiii. 46. ¹⁰ —xxi. 28.

Man, that teacheth all Men every where against the People and the Law, and this Place; while his Affection to the whole Jewish Nation, and his Concern for them was such, as to make him even
¹ *wish that himself was accursed from Christ, for his Brethren, his Kinsmen according to the Flesh.*

It appears from the foregoing Accounts, how natural it was for St. Paul to write as well as preach to the Jews; and how natural also, in writing to them, to avoid the *Authoritative* Style that he used when he wrote to those Churches which had been converted by him, or which were more *peculiarly* within his Commission, and to chuse to write to them only as his *Brethren* and *Kinsmen*, that is, in his own Language, as he and they were equally
² *Hebrews, and Israelites, and the Seed of Abraham.*

But, notwithstanding the Omission of his Name, and of his Apostolical Character, there are many cogent Arguments to satisfy us, that St. Paul was the Author of this Epistle, against the contrary Suspicions of some learned Men. The general Scope of it is to prove, that the rites prescribed by the Ceremonial Law, were only *Types* and *Figures* of Christ, and that He being now come, they were of no further Use, but were to cease and give Way to a Dispensation of a much higher and more excellent Nature. And what was the Accusation brought against St. Paul by the Jews? Why,
³ *That he taught all the Jews which were among the Gentiles, to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their Children, neither to walk after the Customs; and, That he taught all Men every*

¹ Rom. ix. 3. ² 2 Cor. xi. 22. ³ Acts xxi.
21, 28.

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where against the People and the Law, and the Temple.—The Writer of this Epistle uses the Style of ¹ our Brother Timothy; and this is what we find frequently used by St. Paul in his other Epistles. ² Paul an Apostle of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our Brother, is the Introduction to three of them; and writing to the *Thessalonians*, he says, ³ I have sent *Timotheus our Brother*, nor do we find this Style used by any other of the Apostles.—The same is observable of another Expression towards the Conclusion of this Epistle, ⁴ Pray for us; being what we also find in his Epistles both to the ⁵ *Colossians* and ⁶ *Thessalonians*; with others of the same Import in those to the *Romans* and *Ephesians*, where he beseeches them to ⁷ strive together in their Prayers to God for him, and ⁸ to pray always with all Prayer and Supplication for him; nor is this used by any other Apostle.—This ⁹ Epistle, towards the Conclusion, has a solemn Prayer to the God of Peace, for a Blessing upon the Christians to whom he is writing; and we find the like, towards the Conclusion of his Epistle to the ¹⁰ *Romans*. The God of Peace be with you all; and to the ¹¹ *Corinthians*, The God of Love and Peace shall be with you, to the ¹² *Philippians*, The God of Peace shall be with you, and to the ¹³ *Thessalonians*, The very God of Peace sanctify you wholly, and, ¹⁴ The Lord of Peace himself give you Peace always; and the

¹ Heb. xiii. 23. ² 2 Cor. i. 1. Colof. i. 1. Phil. i. 1. ³ 1 Thes. iii. 2. ⁴ Heb. xiii. 18. ⁵ Col. iv. 3. ⁶ 2 Thes. iii. 1. ⁷ Rom. xv. 30. ⁸ Ephes. vi. 18. ⁹ Heb. xiii. 20. ¹⁰ Rom. xv. 33. ---xvi. 20. ¹¹ 2 Cor. xiii. 11. ¹² Phil. iv. 9. ¹³ 1 Thes. v. 23. ¹⁴ 2 Thes. iii. 16.

like Expression is not only thus frequent in St. Paul's Epistles, but is not to be met with in any other.—The same is to be said of the Term ¹ *Mediator*; for though the Thing be spoken of in other Parts of the New Testament, the Term is not found any where, but in the Writings of St. Paul.—In this Epistle he speaks of his Imprisonment, under the Name of *Bonds*; and he mentions the same at least ten Times in his other Epistles, and all of them written from *Italy*, as this to the *Hebrews* was; neither do we find that Expression used by any other Apostle.—In this Epistle he pleads the Integrity of his Heart and Conscience, ² *We trust we have a good Conscience, in all Things willing to live honestly*; and the same Plea is often made by him on other Occasions: Thus his Declaration before the Council was, ³ *Men and Brethren, I have lived in all good Conscience before God unto this Day*; and before Felix, ⁴ *Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a Conscience void of Offence towards God and towards Men*; and in his Epistle to the *Romans*, ⁵ *I say the Truth in Christ, I lie not, my Conscience also bearing me Witness*; to the *Corinthians*, speaking of himself, ⁶ *Our Rejoicing is this, the Testimony of our Conscience*; and to *Timothy*, ⁷ *Whom I serve with pure Conscience*.—This Epistle concludes with a *Salutation* to and from the Brethren; which is found at the End of almost every Epistle of St. Paul; and the Christians are here called *Saints*,

¹ Heb. viii. 6. ---ix. 15. ---xii. 24.

xiii. 18.

³ Acts xxiii. 1.

⁴ Acts xxiv. 16.

⁵ Rom. ix. 1. ⁶ 2 Cor. i. 12. ⁷ 2 Tim. i. 3.

which

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which is a Style very frequently used by that Apostle, and almost *peculiar* to him.

To this Epistle, ¹ St. Peter may well be understood to refer as written by St. Paul, where he is exhorting the Jewish Christians under Persecution, to wait with Patience for the *Day of the Lord*, and to take Care to be found of him *without Spot and blameless*, that it might be *Salvation* to them; and this, in Answer to the Scoffers of those Days, who upbraided them with the *Expectation* of it, as vain and groundless, and, by way of Derision, asked, *Where is the Promise of his Coming?* And then St. Peter adds, *Even as our beloved Brother Paul also, according to the Wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you*; which most probably relates to this Epistle, as the *only one* that he wrote to the Jewish Christians, and as containing in it several Exhortations to the same Purpose with that which St. Peter is there giving. For, not to insist upon his Exhortation to the *Hebrews*, ² *to be Followers of them who through Faith and Patience inherited the Promises*, enforced by the Example of *Abraham*, who after he had patiently endured, obtained the Promise; nor upon that other Exhortation, ³ *Let us hold fast the Profession of our Faith without wavering, for he is faithful that promised*; not, I say, to rest upon these, it will be hard to find in the whole New Testament any Passage to which St. Peter might so probably refer, as this which follows: ⁴ *Cast not away your Confidence, which hath great Recompence of Reward: For ye have Need of Patience, that after ye have done the Will*

¹ 2 Pet. iii. 15, 16. ² Heb. vi. 12, 15. ³ Heb. x. 23. ⁴ Heb. x. 35, 36, &c.

of God, ye might receive the Promise: For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry: Now the Just shall live by Faith; but if any Man draw back, my Soul shall have no Pleasure in him: But we are not of them who draw back unto Perdition, but of them that believe to the Saving of the Soul. As to the Passage in St. Paul's Epistle to the ¹ Romans, which speaks of the Goodness and Forbearance and Long-suffering of God, as leading to Repentance; St. Peter cannot be supposed to refer to it, for two plain Reasons. In that Passage, St. Paul addresses himself to the Unbelieving Jews; whereas St. Peter is writing to the Believing Jews, and to them only. St. Paul's is a Reproof for abusing the Goodness and Long-suffering of God to a Security in sinning, contrary to the Effect it ought to have upon wicked Men; but St. Peter's is an Exhortation to sincere Christians to wait with Patience, in an Assurance that it will bring Salvation in the End.

Under the present Head of *Internal Testimony*, Notice must be taken of a Passage in this Epistle, which may seem at first Sight to imply, that St. Paul was not the Writer of it. Speaking of the Salvation of Sinners through the Gospel, he says, ² Which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto Us by them that heard him; whereas St. Paul had the Gospel revealed to him immediately from Heaven. But to this there are two plain Answers: One, That St. Paul, between his Conversion and the Time when this Epistle was written, had seen and conversed with several of the Apostles. ³ After three years, says he, I went up,

¹ Rom. ii. 4.² Heb. ii. 3.³ Gal. i. 18, 19.

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to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen Days; and he tells us, that at the same Time he saw James, the Brother of our Lord.—¹ Then, fourteen Years after I went up to Jerusalem,—and communicated to them that Gospel which I preached among the Gentiles; and there he saw Peter, James and John, and after that he saw Peter at Antioch. So that St. Paul might truly say, that the Doctrine of the Gospel was confirmed to him by them that heard Christ; and he had Occasion to say it, lest it should be objected to him by the Jewish Christians, that his Doctrine was different from that of the other Apostles; against whom it was a proper Defence, that it was no other Doctrine than that which had been confirmed by their own Apostles, who heard Christ, and had at first preached the Gospel to them. The other Answer is, that it is not uncommon with St. Paul to include himself in the Number of those to whom he writes, though not concerned equally with them, or not at all: ² Let us not commit Fornication.—Let us not tempt Christ.—³ We ourselves (speaking of the Gentile State) were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers Lusts and Pleasures, living in Malice and Envy, hateful, and hating one another.

Besides the Internal Proofs that St. Paul was the Writer of this Epistle there are Proofs External, and those both numerous and express. Not to mention in this Place the Citations of the most early Fathers out of this Epistle, as being only Proofs of the Authority, and not of the Author, and made by Writers who rarely mention the

¹ Gal ii. 1, 9. 11. ² 1 Cor. x. 8, 9. ³ Tit. iii. 3.

Name of the Apostle whose Words they cite : In the second Century, ¹ *Clemens Alexandrinus* mentions it under the Name of St. Paul, where speaking of the Greek Philosophy, as styled by that Apostle, *Elements or Introductions to the Truth*, and expressly mentioning him by Name, he adds, *And therefore writing to the Hebrews, he saith,* ² *Ye have need that one teach you again, which be the Elements (or first Principles) of the Oracles of God.* And ³ elsewhere, having cited a Passage of St. Paul's Epistle to *Titus* concerning the Behaviour of the elder Women in Quietness and Sobriety, *That the Word of God be not blasphemed*, he immediately adds, ⁴ *But rather, says the same Apostle, follow Peace with all Men, &c.* repeating four Verses of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*. So also ⁵ *Origen*, in the third Century, having quoted these Words out of St. Paul's Epistle to the ⁶ *Corinthians*, *I have fed you with Milk, and not with Meat*, adds this, The same Person saith, ⁷ *Ye are become such as have need of Milk, and not of strong Meat*, and then he goes on to repeat two other entire Verses out of this Epistle to the ⁸ *Hebrews*. And ⁹ elsewhere, having cited Passages out of the other Epistles of St. Paul, he adds parallel Passages out of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, with this or the like Connection, *The same Apostle saith*. In his Ho-

¹ Clem. Alex. Strom. l. 6. §. 8. Col. ii. 8. ² Heb. v. 12. ³ Clem. Alex. Strom. l. 4. §. 20. ⁴ Heb. xii. 13, 14, 15. —xiii. 4. ⁵ Orig. contr. Cels. l. 3, p. 143. ⁶ 1 Cor. iii. 2. ⁷ Heb. v. 12, 13, 14. ⁸ Heb. x. 32, 35. ⁹ Orig. Philocal. p. 10, 17. adv. Cels. l. 7. p. 351. and in other Places. Euseb. l. 6. c. 25.

milies upon this Epistle he accounts for the Difference between it and St. Paul's other Epistles in Point of Style, by supposing that the Matter was his, but that it was composed and methodized by some other Hand. And therefore he commends those Churches which received it as St. Paul's, because, as he adds, the Ancients did not ascribe it to him rashly. And that which follows, of some of the Ancients ascribing it to St. Clement, and some to St. Luke, evidently refers to the supposed Penman, and not to the Author; to the Language only, and not at all to the Matter.

In the next Century, the 1 Council of *Laodicea* enumerating the known and received Books of the New Testament, place in their Course, *The fourteen Epistles of St. Paul; to the Romans one, to the Corinthians two, &c. and to the Hebrews one*: To which I will add the Testimonies of two Writers, one of the *Greek*, and the other of the *Latin* Church. I mean *Eusebius* and *Jerome*; who had made more nice and strict Enquiries than any other about the Books of the Old and New Testament, and the Writers of them. 2 *Eusebius*, speaking of the received Books of the New Testament, delivered his own Judgment, *That the fourteen Epistles of St. Paul [which includes that to the Hebrews] are known and clear*. Afterwards, speaking of 3 *Clement's* Epistle to the *Corinthians*, in which, says he, *are inserted several Passages out of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and sometimes in the very Words*, he adds, 'From whence it is most evident, that this cannot be a modern Writing [*St. Clement* having

¹ Concil. Laod. Can. 60. ² Euseb. l. 3. c. 3.—l. 6, c. 20. ³ —l. 3. c. 38.

been a Disciple and Companion of St. Paul] and then he goes on, *Wherefore it seems with good Reason to be added to his other Epistles. For St. Paul having written to the Hebrews in their own Language, the Translation of it [into the Greek Tongue] is ascribed by some to St. Luke, and by others to Clement. Which Testimonies warrant what we find in* ¹ *Theodoret, in the Preface to his Commentary upon this Epistle, Eusebius confessed, that this was the Epistle of the most divine Paul, and affirmed, that all the Antients were of that Opinion; And* ² *Photius, a Collector in the ninth Century, at the same Time that he cites an obscure* ³ *Writer who had said that Hyppolitus and Irenæus did not believe this Epistle to be St. Paul's, immediately adds, But Clement and Eusebius, and the main Body of the divine Fathers, reckon this among his other Epistles. And the same* ⁴ *Photius mentions that Opinion of Hyppolitus, as one, among others, of his crude and indigested Assertions.*

'Tis true, ⁵ *Eusebius takes Notice, that some did not receive the Epistle to the Hebrews, because they said it was not received by the Roman Church; which he particularly affirms of Caius; and adds, in a more qualified Sense,* ⁶ *That some of the Romans did not suppose it to be his. But it must be remembered, that Caius advanced this Opinion in a Dispute with* ⁷ *one, who affirmed that Christians* ⁸ *falling from the Faith, ought not to be admitted to* ⁹ *Penance, and who, without Doubt,*

¹ Theodoret. Pref.

² Phot. Bibl. Cod. 232.

³ Gobarus.

⁴ Phot. Bibl. c. 121.

⁵ Euseb. l. iii.

c. 3. ⁶ Euseb. l. 6. c. 20.

⁷ Proclus.

⁸ Lapsi.

⁹ Tertul. de Pudic. c. 20.

alleged against *Caius* that Passage in the Epistle to the *Hebrews*: *It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the Heavenly Gift, and were made Partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the Power of the World to come; if they shall fall away, to renew them again to Repentance.* And as this became a common Controversy in the *Latin Church*, which maintained the Opinion of *Caius* for restoring lapsed Christians, against the *Montanists* first, and then against the *Novatians*; it was natural, in the Heat of Dispute, to endeavour to weaken the Force of that Text, by raising a Doubt, whether *St. Paul*, whose Name was not set to this Epistle as it is to the rest, was the Author of it. But, that the Doubts concerning the Authority of it were not the same in the *Latin Church* from the Beginning, may be fairly presumed from this Epistle's being inserted among the others, in the ancient *Latin Version* of the New Testament, which was made for the Use of that Church.

St. Jerome, who occasionally takes Notice, that though it was received as *St. Paul's* by some of the *Latin Church*, yet many doubted of it; expressly condemns them for it, and confronts that Doubt with the Authority ² of the *Greek Church* and all the *Eastern Churches*, who unanimously received it; and who, undoubtedly, had a better Opportunity than the *Latin Church*, to enquire into the Authority of it. Which Determination, as of a Point in Question before him, makes it plain, that his mentioning it with Tokens of

¹ Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6. ² Hieron. Ep. ad Dardan.—
ad Evagr.

Doubt in some other Places where he only quotes it *occasionally*, was not the Result of his own Judgment, but a Deference he paid to the Opinion of the *Latin Church*. And as he expressly declared his own Satisfaction, upon the Authority of the Ancients, 'That it was rightly ascribed to St. Paul,' so has the whole *Latin Church* shewn themselves to be convinced of their Error, by having for so many Ages received and inserted it among his other ¹ Epistles.

That which gave the main Ground of Dispute concerning the Writer of this Epistle, was the Want of St. Paul's Name at the Beginning, ² which has been already accounted for; and this led the critical Enquiries into *Words and Phrases*, to insist upon the Argument from the *Style and Manner* of Writing in this Epistle, as different from that of St. Paul in his other Epistles. The Manner of Writing, say they, is more lofty, and the Style raised to a greater Height, than in his other Epistles. But if it be, the Subject also is more lofty and exalted. 'The Dignity of Christ above the Angels, 'The Glory of Christ at the Right-hand of God, 'The heavenly Tabernacle, 'The everlasting Priesthood, 'Christ's mediating and interceding for us in the Presence of God; 'And, in general, all those high and Heavenly Things, of which the legal Performances under the *Mosaical Law* were only Types and Figures; together with the *Wonders* wrought by the Patriarchs, Martyrs, and other famous Men, in virtue of their Faith. And therefore the Difference in Style is of little Force in any Case, since it is very common for the same Writer to vary his

¹ Mill. Proleg. p. 26. ² P. 182, &c,

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Style, according to the Subject, the Occasion, the Degrees of Earnestness, &c. so here it is of no Force at all, when set up in ¹ Opposition to the Testimony of the best and most approved Writers among the Ancients; and when it is further considered, that the Attempts to ascribe the Epistle to others, (*Luke, Clement, Apollos*) are founded only upon some remote Conjectures, and not countenanced by ancient Testimonies, otherwise than as they are considered under the Characters of *Writers* and *Reporters* of St. Paul's Doctrine. To which I must add, that those early Differences in Opinion were not so much about the *Authority* of the Book, as about the Author; they who had their Doubts whether St. Paul was the Writer, readily acknowledging that the Epistle came from a Person *Divinely inspired*. This was the Case with all those of old, who believed it to be written in *Hebrew* by St. Paul, and translated into *Greek* by some one of the Apostolical Persons just now mentioned, (which, whether true or not, was a prevailing Opinion among the Ancients) and also with those others, who supposed it to be drawn up by some Apostolical Person, agreeably to the *Sense* and *Meaning* of St. Paul; and with ² *Tertullian*, who ascribed it to *Barnabas*, an Apostle and Companion of St. Paul. And the same has been the Case with more modern Writers; as appears by the Declarations of two Divines, (both of them remarkable for a Latitude of Thought in Religious Matters) even while they are giving their Reasons, why they do not think it to have been written by St. Paul. ³ *It does not seem, says one, to have*

¹ See before, p. 190. ² Tertull. de Pudic. c. 20.
 Acts xiii. 2, 4. ³ Limbourg. Pref. to Comment.
 upon Hebr.

been written by St. Paul, but neither can it be clearly denied to be his. For it is probable, it was written by one of St. Paul's Companions, with his Privy, and agreeably to his Doctrine: To which he adds, 'I acknowledge the Divine Authority of this Epistle.' And says¹ another, *Whoever reads it with Attention, will see every where the Apostolical Doctrine concerning the Controversies between the Christians and Jews or Judaising Christians of those Days*; from whence he infers, 'That it must be written before the Destruction of the Temple, because after that, and the Extinction of the Levitical Worship, and the Destruction of a great Part of the Jewish Nation, there could scarce be any Occasion for entering into those Controversies; nor is there in it the least Footstep of any Opinions, Disputes, or Matters, later than the Apostolick Age.' And again, 'Neither the Matter, nor the Manner of explaining, nor the Language, breathe any Thing but what is Apostolical, and of Divine Inspiration; in which I and all others who have written concerning this Epistle, do agree; however we may differ about the Author.'

Besides this Epistle to the Hebrews, there were some others that the whole² Christian Church did not receive so soon as those already mentioned, concerning which there was never any Doubt. These are, the Epistle of St. James, the Second Epistle of St. Peter, the Second and Third of St. John, and that of St. Jude. Concerning these, it shall be particularly shewn, that each of them was received early; and there is this plain Reason why they were not received by all Chri-

¹ Le Clerc, Hist. Eccl. Ann. 69. ² Page 181.

stians *so early* as the rest, That they were written
 either to particular Persons, as the second and
 third of *St. John*, or to the Jewish Converts *dis-*
persed in several Countries, as the second of *St.*
Peter and *St. James*, or to the Christians in gene-
 ral, as the Epistle of *St. Jude*. And since
 Satisfaction to be given to particular Churches
 that they were genuine, depended upon the View
 of the Original Letters, and of the Evidence of
 those who carried and those who received them;
 it is manifest at first Sight, that this Satisfaction
 might be had much more readily, when it was
 known to what peculiar Churches this or that
 Epistle was directed, and where the Originals re-
 mained, and both the Messenger and they who
 received it from his Hands might be spoke with;
 than it could be had where the Epistles were di-
 rected to Christians in general as dispersed through-
 out the Empire; and while it remained uncer-
 tain, in what particular City or Country either the
 Originals or the Evidences of their being so were
 to be met with. The not receiving these so
 early and universally as the rest, is an Argument
 of the Care taken by particular Churches to be
thoroughly satisfied, that what they admitted was
 really written by persons divinely inspired; and
 the receiving them so universally as they after-
 wards did, is as good an Argument that they re-
 ceived due Satisfaction concerning them. Nor
 can any possible Reason be assigned, why the
 whole Christian Church, *Eastern* and *Western*,
 should for so many Ages have put these Epistles
 upon the same Foot of Authority with the others
 which had been universally received, but that all
 Ground of Doubting was by Degrees removed,

and every Church had received full Satisfaction that they were written by the inspired Persons whose Names they bore, or to whom they were ascribed. We find this to be the Case in the fourth Century, when these were received in the Greek Church as of Divine Authority by the Council of *Laodicea*; and forty Years after, the same was solemnly declared to be the Sense of the *Latin* Church in the Decretal Epistle of *Innocent I.* which was also confirmed eighteen Years after by a publick Decree of the Council of *Carthage*.

But long before these solemn and general Recognitions of their Authority, they had been received as genuine and authentick by many Churches as well as Writers. So ¹ *Eusebius* says of them all, 'That however they were reckoned among the *doubtful* Books, they were acknowledged by many.'

But to descend to particulars. The same ² *Eusebius* says of the Epistle of St. JAMES, That it was publickly read in *very many* Churches, together with the others. And two peculiar Reasons may be assigned, why it was thought spurious by some, and doubtful by others, and not sooner received by ³ *all*; one, that tho' it is expressly under the Name of *James*, yet there being *more* Persons of that Name spoken of in the New Testament, a Dispute arose to which of them it ought to be ascribed; and the other, that what he says of the Necessity of *Works*, in order to justify Men in the Sight of God, seemed to contradict what St. *Paul* had delivered concerning Justification by

¹ Euseb. lib. iii. c. 25.

² Euseb. lib. 2. c. 23.

³ Ibid.

Faith alone. And St. *Paul's* Epistles being universally received, they who believed or suspected that Contrariety in Doctrine, must reject the other of Course, or at least suspend their Opinion about it. But as those Doubts vanished in particular Churches, and it appeared that St. *Paul* and St. *James* were so far from contradicting each other, that one meant the No-necessity of observing the Ceremonial Law, and the other the Necessity of observing the Moral Law; the one, That *Works* of what Kind soever, without Faith, are ineffectual to Salvation, and the other, That Faith *without Works* cannot save; no Scruple was made of putting it upon the same Foot with the other Epistles, in Point of Authority. ¹ *Eusebius* says, that not many of the Ancients mentioned it; and their Silence is already accounted for; but ² *Jerom* tells us, that it obtained *Authority* by Degrees, and we find it currently ³ cited, like other Scriptures, by the Fathers of the fourth Century, and particularly by ⁴ *Jerom* himself, as written by *James the Apostle*, and the *Brother of our Lord*: So that, in the Words of a learned Commentator, ⁵ *They that doubted of it before, did in the fourth Century embrace the Opinion of those that received it; and from thence no Church nor Ecclesiastical Writer ever doubted of it; but on the contrary, all the Catalogues of the Books of Scripture, whether published by General or Provincial Councils, &c. number it among the Canonical Scriptures.*

¹ Euseb. l. ii. c. 23. ² Jerom de Jac. ³ Mill. Proleg. p. 24. ⁴ Jerom Ep. ad Paul. ⁵ --- Contra Jovin. c. 24.

The SECOND Epistle of St. PETER has been already observed to be one of those which ¹ *Eusebius* mentions as questioned, but which also were acknowledged by *many* as genuine. And this shews, that when it is said by him, that the ancient Fathers acknowledged but *one* Epistle of St. Peter, i. e. the *First*, it must be meant, *Universally* and *without Exception*; with reference to the *Second*, which was not *so* acknowledged. St. ² *Jerom* grounds his Doubt concerning the Second Epistle, upon the Difference from the first in Point of *Style*. But this is true, in *Strictness*, of the second Chapter only, which is as different in *Style* from the first and third Chapters, as it is from the first Epistle; being, as to the Matter of it, manifestly taken from some *Jewish* Book, which gave an Account of the Scoffers before the Flood, who derided *Noah's* Prediction of it, and applied by St. Peter to the false Teachers, who were crept in among the Christians, and derided their *Expectation* of Deliverance from the Persecutions they were under, grounded upon what our Saviour and his Apostles had told them concerning the Judgments that were to come upon the *Jewish* Persecutors. As to the *Style* of that second Chapter, it is throughout *lofty* and *pompous*; and in that Respect different from the *Style* of the other two. But is this a Suggestion fit to be opposed to the many Testimonies of its being St. Peter's, viz. ' Its bearing the Name of *Simon Peter*, by which he is so frequently spoken of in the Gospels. ' The

¹ Euseb. l. 3. c. 25. — l. 3. c. 3. — l. 6. c. 25.

² Jerom in the Word *Petrus*.

express Mention it makes of a *former* ¹ Epistle he had written to them, and the visible *Connection* between the two Epistles, (the *Second* being written to arm the Christians against the Uneasiness they were under, upon the Delay of that Deliverance which the *first* had promised :) ² The Mention he makes of his approaching Dissolution, ³ *Knowing that shortly I must put off this my Tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me*; which probaly relates to what our Saviour intimated to St. ⁴ *Peter* of the *Time* of his giving Testimony to the Gospel by his Death, that it should be before the Destruction of *Jerusalem*; and the express Mention of what he *heard* and *saw* at the ⁵ Transfiguration on the Mount, where none of the Disciples were with Christ, except *Peter, James, and John*. To all which it must be added, That there is a fair Presumption of its being written by an *Apostolical* Person, from his using the Style of our beloved *Brother* ⁶ *Paul*; and we don't find it was ever ascribed to any other of that character. So far from this, that St. ⁷ *Jerom*, who takes Notice of the Difference in Style as the Foundation of the Doubts concerning it, solves the Difficulty not by denying this Epistle to be St. *Peter's*, which could not be denied for the Reasons above-mentioned, but by supposing, that in the two Epistles they were two different Hands who expressed his Sentiments in *Greek*. Whether this was so, or not, it shews that in

¹ 2 P. t. iii. 1. ² 2 Pet. i. 14. ³ John xxi. 22.
⁴ 2 Pet. i. 16, 17, 18. Matt. xvii. 1. ⁵ 2 Pet. iii. 2, 13.
⁶ Jerom in the Word *Petrus*, and Ep. ad Hedib. qu. 11.

St. *Jerom's* Opinion, the Arguments for its being St. *Peter's* could not be got over; and in this Opinion, the Writers of that and the following Ages, both in the ¹ *Eastern* and *Western* Church, concur with great Unanimity.

The Objection, and the only Objection, against receiving the Epistle of St. ² *JUDE* at first, was his citing the Prophecy of *Enoch*; but it is really hard to find where the Force of the Argument lies; That because an Apostle cites out of another Book (though we suppose it Apocryphal) a Passage very good in itself, and very apposite to his Purpose, therefore he could not be the Author of the Writing into which the Citation is grafted; tho' such Writing bears his Name, and is confirmed to be His by ancient Authority, as in this Case it is by the joint Testimonies of ³ *Tertullian*, *Clement* of *Alexandria*, and *Origen*, who expressly cite it as St. *Jude's*; wherein also there is a great Unanimity among the Writers of the succeeding Ages, both *Greek* and *Latin*.

The *SECOND* and *THIRD* Epistles of St. *JOHN*, are so far from being liable to the Objection of a Difference in Style from the *first*, which was universally received as his; that the Manner of Writing is remarkably the same in all the three; and of the thirteen Verses which make the whole second Epistle, several are manifestly the same in Sense, and some *Word* for *Word*. None of the three are under the Name of St. *John*, and in that

¹ Mill. Proleg. p. 25. ² Jerom Catal. Jude. Jude 14, 15. ³ Tertull. de Ornat Mul. l. 1. Clem. Alex. Pædag. l. 3. c. 8. Orig. Comm. in Matth. Tom. 11. p. 223. Mill. Proleg. p. 25.

Respect the two last are of equal Authority with the first; but the second and third are written under the Style of *Elder*, which peculiarly suits the Age as well as the Character of *St. John*, who was above ninety Years old when they were written, and had the Direction and Government of all the *Asiatick* Churches. Considering how very short these two Epistles are, and that several Things contained in them are also to be found in the first Epistle, it is not to be expected that many Citations out of them should be met with in the Writers of the Church, either Ancient or Modern. But it so falls out, that *Irenæus* in the second Century cites three Verses Word for Word, out of the second Epistle, under the Name of *John the Disciple of our Lord*; and, that no Doubt may remain, whether he might not mean *John the Presbyter*, whom we find mentioned in *Eusebius* as one of Christ's Disciples, or any other *John* but *John* the Apostle and Evangelist; he cites two other Passages to the very same Purpose, one taken out of the first Epistle, and the other out of the Gospel of *St. John*, and all the three as taken out of the Writings of one and the same Person. *Clemens Alexandrinus*, citing a Passage out of the first Epistle, calls it his *larger* Epistle; which supposes one, at least, that was not so large. *Dionysius Alexandrinus*, contending for an Opinion he had entertained, that *St. John* was not the Writer of the *Apocalypse*, makes it one Argument that the Name is set to the *Apocalypse*, whereas

¹ 2 John vii. 8, 11. Irenæus, l. ii. c. 13. §. 2.
— l. 3. c. 18. ² Euseb. l. 3. c. 39. ³ Clem.
Alex. Strom. l. 2. ⁴ Euseb. l. 7. c. 23.

no Name is set to the second or third Epistle, which he says were then usually ascribed to him. And *Origen*, where he tells us, that *all* did not receive these two Epistles, implies that the *greatest Part* did. The Occasion of writing them is supposed with great Probability to have been, the Report made of the Liberality of the *Elect Lady* and of *Gaius*, by certain Persons whom St. *John* had recommended to the Churches of *Asia* for the Furtherance of the Gospel; and these Acknowledgments of the Liberality of each, must come from one and the same Hand, namely, that upon whose Recommendation it was bestowed.

Altho' the Book of REVELATIONS is of a different Nature from the Epistles, as relating more to the State of the Christian Church in *future Times*, than to the Doctrines at first delivered to it; yet because it is Part of the New Testament, and one of the Books about which Doubts have been raised, whether or no they were written by the Persons whose Names they bear; I will here lay down the many cogent Reasons there are for concluding it to have been written by St. *John* the Apostle and Evangelist, and not by any other. In the first Verse it is called ² *The Revelation of Jesus Christ to his Servant John*; and at the ninth Verse it is said, *I John was in the Isle that is called Patmos, for the Word of God and for the Testimony of Jesus Christ*. Now ³ *Eusebius*, speaking of the Persecution of the Christians by the Emperor *Domitian*, mentions St. *John the Apostle and Evangelist* as then banished to the Isle of *Patmos*.

¹ Cl. c. An. 260. *Euseb.* l. 6. c. 25. *Mill*, Proleg. p. 18. ² *Rev.* i. 1, 9. ³ *Euseb.* l. 3. c. 18.

The same is mentioned by ¹ *Tertullian*; and ² *Clemens Elexandrinus* speaks of his Return from thence to *Ephesus* after the Death of *Domitian*; and there is no Pretence that any other *John* was banished to that Island. ³ *Justin Martyr*, in his Dialogue with *Trypho* the Jew, expressly ascribes it to *John, one of the Apostles of Christ*. ⁴ *Irenæus* mentions it as the *Revelation of John the Disciple of our Lord*; and that he meant St. *John* the Apostle and Evangelist, appears from what he tells us concerning the Time when this Revelation was made to him, viz. about the ⁵ *latter End of the Reign of Domitian*, which was the Time when he was in the Island of *Patmos*; and yet more ⁶ clearly, by telling us it was the Disciple who *leaned upon Jesus's Bosom at Supper*. ⁷ *Tertullian* also cites it expressly under the Name of *John the Apostle*; and ⁸ *Origen*, where he speaks of the Banishment of *John* the Brother of *James* into that Island, speaks also of the Revelation there made to him, and cites the Book under his Name. Likewise the Style given by the Ancients to the Writer of this Book, and affixed to the Title of it, I mean, ⁹ *The Divine*, is usually supposed to refer to the first Verse of St. *John's* Gospel, in which he asserts the ¹⁰ *Divinity of Christ*.

In these Authorities there are several Circumstances which give a *peculiar Force* to them in the

¹ Tertull. de Præscrip. c. 36. ² Euseb. l. 3. c. 23. ³ Just. Mart. Dial. Tryph. ⁴ Iren. l. 4. c. 37. 50. Ibid. l. 5. c. 26. ⁵ Ibid. l. 5. c. 30. ⁶ Ibid. l. 4. c. 37. ⁷ Tertull. contra Marc. l. 3. c. 14. ⁸ Origen. Commen. Matth. p. 417. ⁹ Θεόλογον. ¹⁰ Θεός ὁ λόγος.

present Point. In general, what they say, is delivered without the least Mark of *Doubt* or *Hesitation*. And as to the particular Writers, ¹ *Irenæus* was the Disciple of *Polycarp*, and *Polycarp* of *St. John*; and he tells us, he had a Passage in this Book explained to him by those who had seen *John Face to Face*. *Justin Martyr* was converted to the Christian Faith within thirty-eight Years after the Writing of the Apocalypse, and within fifty-four Years from that Time he wrote his Dialogue with *Trypho the Jew*. Those several Fathers, who give Testimony to the Authority of the Apocalypse, as written by *John* the Apostle and Evangelist, did not all dwell in *Asia*, but in several other Parts of the World, whose Sense they may be presumed to speak, as well as their own: *Irenæus* at *Lions* in *Gaul*, *Clemens* and *Origen* in *Egypt*, and *Tertullian* in *Africa*. And it is a poor Evasion of the Authority of those ancient Writers, to alledge that some of them had their peculiar Notions about *other* Points; as if a Singularity of Opinion in this or that Doctrine, could render them incompetent Witnesses to a Matter of Fact, which they had so good Opportunity to know.

Their authority is further strengthened by this, ² that there is no Ground or Colour of the two Conjectures of the Apocalypse being written by *John* the *Presbyter*, or by *Cerinthus*. There is no Pretence to say, that the first was banished into the Isle of *Patmos*; and as to the second, his Principles, ³ That Christ was a meer Man, and,

¹ *Iren.* l. 5. c. 30.
l. 7. c. 25.

² *Euseb.* l. 3. c. 28. *Ibid.*

³ That

‘ That he was not to rise from the Dead till the general Resurrection, are directly contrary to the Doctrine of the Apocalypse ¹; and, moreover, his millenary State was not the Life of *Saints*, as the Apocalypse represents it, but the Life of *Libertines*.

That there were so few Copies taken of this Book, in Comparison of the other Books of the New Testament, was owing to the Subject Matter of it, which was very obscure, and related not so much to the *past* or *present*, as to the *future* ² State of the Christian Church, in which the Generality of Christians were not directly concerned. For this Reason it was not joined at first to the *Evangelical* or *Epistolary* Canon, but was considered as a Writing by itself, and of a different Nature from the rest; neither was it directed to be read publickly in the Church, because of its Obscurity, and the little Relation it had to the Gospel State in those Days. And this, together with the ³ *Time* when it was written, accounts for the Silence of the most early Fathers concerning it, and for its being omitted in some of the Catalogues of the Books of Holy Scripture, particularly that of the Council of *Laodicea*; the Design of which Council was to enumerate such Books as were to be *read publickly* in the Church, as appears by the express Words of the Canon upon that Head.

The Difference in Style from St. *John*’s other Writings, and the Mention of his Name here and

¹ Rev. i. 5, 7, 8, 11. — xxi. 6. — xxii. 13.

² Orig. Comm. in Matth. p. 220. ³ Not before the Year 96.

not in the others, are also fairly accounted for by the Difference of Subject ; this being of the *Prophetick* Kind, and the Prophets usually prefixing their *Names* to the Accounts of the Visions and Revelations they had received from God ; as we find in the Instances of ¹ *Isaiah*, *Jeremiah*, *Ezekiel*, *Daniel*, and others. But notwithstanding the Difference in *Style*, we may observe, in several Instances, a *Coincidence* in Expression between this and his other Writings ; and this generally, in such Expressions as are not to be met with in the whole New Testament, except in the Gospel and Epistles of St. *John*. In the Revelations, it is said of Christ, that his Name is called, ² *The Word of God* ; and in the Gospel of St. *John* he is styled ³ *the Word*, and in his first Epistle, ⁴ *the Word of Life*. In the Revelations, he is called ⁵ *the Lamb* ; and in the Gospel of St. *John*, ⁶ *the Lamb of God*. In the Revelations, the Name of Christ is, ⁷ *He that is true*,—⁸ *He that is faithful and true* ; and in the Gospel of St. *John*, ⁹ *He that is true—full of Truth*, and *the Truth*. In the Revelations, ¹⁰ *Manna* is applied to spiritual Food ; and so it is applied in the Gospel of St. *John* ¹¹. In the Revelations it is said from the Prophet *Zechariah*, ¹² *Every Eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him* ; and in the Gospel of St. *John*, ¹³ *They shall look on him whom they*

¹ Isai. i. 1. Jer. i. 1. Ezek. i. 3. Dan. vii. 2.
² Rev. xix. 13. ³ John i. 1. ⁴ 1 John i. 1.
⁵ Rev. v. 6, 12. ⁶ John i. 36. ⁷ Rev. iii. 7.
⁸ —xix. 11. ⁹ John i. 14. —xiv. 6. 1 John v. 20.
¹⁰ Rev. ii. 17. ¹¹ John vi. 32. ¹² Rev. i. 7.
¹³ John xix. 37.

pierced. In the Revelations, Christ saith, ¹ *If any Man hear my Voice, and open the Door, I will come to him, and sup with him, and he with me :* In the Gospel of St. *John*, ² *If a Man love me he will keep my Words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our Abode with him.*

Thus stands the Authority of this Book, upon the Foot of ancient Testimonies. But when the Doctrine of the *Millenary* State began to be advanced under the Notion of a State in which *sensual Delights* were to be enjoyed in the greatest Perfection, and the Authority of the ³ Revelations was alledged, tho' very unjustly, in Support of that carnal Doctrine; the Zeal of some Writers against this Doctrine, which was indeed exceeding wicked and corrupt, led them to raise Scruples about the Authority of the Book itself; which, tho' it ⁴ speaks of Christ's reigning a thousand Years with the *Saints*, gives not the least Ground to suppose that it will be a State of sensual Delights. On the contrary, it supposes the Members of that Kingdom to be *Martyrs*, and other *Holy* Men who had preserved themselves from the Corruptions of the World. But ⁵ after this Controversy was over, the Scruples vanished, and the Christian Church received it among the other inspired Writings, upon those ancient Testimonies, that it was the Work of St. *John* the Apostle and Evangelist; though not being so proper as the rest to be read publickly in the Church, it might in that Respect

¹ Rev. iii. 20. ² John xiv. 23. ³ Euseb. l. 3. c. 28. Ibid. l. 7. c. 25. Mill's Prol. p. 19. ⁴ Rev. xx. 4, 5. ⁵ Mill's Prol. p. 17.

be considered sometimes in a different Light from them.

This is not the only Instance in which a particular Controversy has led Men in the Heat of Dispute, to call in Question the Authority of particular Books of Scripture, which they thought unfavourable to the Doctrine they had espoused: There are Instances of this kind, both ancient and modern. The *Manichees*, who held a monstrous Opinion, that the God of the Old Testament was not the God of the New, rejected St. *Matthew's* Gospel on account of the References he makes to the Old Testament, which shew both to be the Dispensations of one and the same God, and both to center in the Messiah. The *Ebionites*, who in some Sort received the Faith, but yet were zealous for the *Mosaical* Law, admitted no Gospel but that of St. *Matthew*, as written particularly for the Use of the *Hebrews*. The *Alogi* (or Deniers of the *Logos*) finding it impossible to reconcile their Doctrine to the Gospel of St. *John*, and yet not venturing to except against the Authority of an Apostle, had no Way left, but to deny that he was the Writer. The *Latin* Church, as I have already¹ observed, finding themselves pressed by some Passages in the Epistle to the *Hebrews* in Favour of the *Novatian* Doctrine against the receiving of lapsed Penitents, shewed too great an Inclination for some Time, to cherish Doubts concerning the Author of that Epistle. And in later Days, it is well known, that the *Antinomians*, and others who have carried the Doctrine of Justification by Faith

¹ Page 193.

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alone to too great a Height, have also endeavoured to invalidate the Epistle of St. *James*, which makes *Works* also a necessary Condition of our being justified in the Sight of God.

But however serviceable it may have been thought to the Advocates for this or that peculiar Tenet, to raise Doubts about the Authority of this or that Epistle, as particularly relating to the Dispute then in Hand; yet those Doubts can be of no Service to the Cause of Infidelity, as long as the Truth of the Christian Religion, and the general Doctrines of it, are supported by others, whose Writings have been *universally* received both as genuine, and as of ¹ Divine Authority.

It appears by what has been said upon this Head, 'That the Books of the New Testament were written by the Persons whose Names they bear, or to whom they have been ascribed, and that those Writings are divinely inspired; ' That the greatest Part of those Books have been unanimously received by all Christian Churches from the Beginning; ' That the Reason why some were not received so soon as others, was, the Necessity of particular Churches having Satisfaction as to their being written by some Apostle, or inspired Person, and the Difficulty of obtaining such Satisfaction in some Cases more than in others, by reason of Distance of Place, or other Circumstances; ' That the Doubts which have arisen concerning some particular Books, have generally been the Doubts, not of *Churches*, but of *Persons*, and have been grounded either upon the Want of express Mention of the Writer's Name, or there

¹ See before, Page 181.

having

having been two Persons of the same Name; both which Uncertainties are adjusted, and the Doubts arising from them fully cleared, by Testimonies ancient and uncontested; ' That the Differences of Style are either imaginary, or such as the Differences in the Subjects and Occasions fairly account for; and are by no Means of Weight enough to be opposed to the positive Testimony of ancient and authentick Writers; that those, and the like Arguments, weak and inconclusive in their Nature, have been generally laid hold on, on Purpose to favour some Opinions which particular Persons had espoused, and which had no better Arguments to support them; and, ' That these having yielded to the Force of Truth for so many hundred Years, and the Writings of the New Testament having been so long received by the whole Christian Church as of Apostolical Authority, nothing more is needful to establish them as such, but to shew, that,

V. *The Books of the New Testament, in which the Doctrines delivered by Christ and his Apostles are contained, have been faithfully Transmitted to the Christians of succeeding Ages.* And, in general, it rests upon those who call in Question the Fidelity of the Transmission in this Case, to shew that any other Book whatsoever has such and so many plain and strong Testimonies of a *faithful* Transmission, as the New Testament; lest while their Zeal against Christianity drives them into groundless Cavils and Doubts about the Authority of those Books, they involve themselves in the Absurdity of rejecting all ancient Writings whatsoever, as not only altered from the Originals, but altered

altered to such a Degree as not to represent to us the genuine Meaning and Design of their Authors. It is well known how early the Christian Religion was carried into almost all Parts of the *Roman* Empire, into Regions and Countries very numerous and very distant from one another; and as Christianity spread, copies of the New Testament spread with it, and not only remained in the Hands of Numbers of private Christians, but were publickly received and read in their Religious Assemblies. So that if one Person had attempted to alter and corrupt his Copy, it would quickly have been discovered by the rest; or if a whole *Country* had attempted it, the Copies throughout all other Countries would have been so many Testimonies of the Fraud. If therefore we could suppose the ancient Christians ever so much *inclined* to alter and corrupt, none of them could have attempted it with the least Probability of Success: And what rendered it yet more impracticable was, the Appeal that might be made, upon any Suspicion of Forgery, to the authentick Writings, remaining and kept with the greatest Care in the Archives of several Churches that had been planted by the Apostles; to which *Tertllian* expressly refers in his Reasonings against the Hereticks of those Times, as then in Being, and to be freely consulted. But what should *tempt* or *incline* the first Christians to corrupt Books that contained those Truths, on which they grounded all their Hopes, and for which they were ready to sacrifice their Lives: Books, which they kept with so much Care, and held sacred to such a Degree, that if any Christian

• *Tertull. de Præscript. adv. Hæreticos.*

happened

happened to be persuaded by Threatenings and Cruelties, to deliver them up to the Heathen Persecutors, they were put under the severest Penance by the Church; and we know some chose to die rather than deliver them. Many Passages also cited out of those Books, are found in the most early Writers of the Church, which appear to be the same that we now have in our printed Copies. Controversies arose in the Church as early as the second Century; and as both Sides appealed to those Writings, so if either had changed and corrupted them, the Cheat must have been discovered, and the Authors of the Corruption exposed by their Adversaries; they who were concerned in those Controversies being many of them Persons who wanted neither Learning nor Penetration. The same Writings were early translated out of the *Greek* into other Languages, (*Syriack, Latin, &c.*) between which and the original *Greek* there is the greatest Agreement in *Sense* and *Matter*. Add to all this, That many ancient written Copies, of those early Translations, and also of the Original *Greek*, have been preserved to our own Times, and procured by learned Men out of the several Countries in *Europe, Asia, and Africa*, where Christianity was planted in the most early Ages; and such Copies have been found, upon the exactest Collation, to agree with those that are now used in the Christian Church, with much less Variation than is allowed, in all other Writings, to be fairly placed to the Mistakes and Oversights of Transcribers.

For as to the Objection from the great Number of various Readings which have been found upon comparing those Copies, it is of no Manner of Weight,

Weight. It is indeed fairly presumed, that the Providence of God would preserve inspired Writings, which were intended for the *perpetual* Instruction of the Church, pure and uncorrupt, as to the *Doctrines* contained in them; but it is not pretended that the *Transcribers* of those Writings were secured by any extraordinary Interposition of Providence, from every the least Error in *copying* them. It was necessary that the Books themselves should be written under the immediate Direction of the Holy Spirit, because the Things to be delivered in them were above the Reach of natural Reason, and nothing less than Divine Inspiration could make them a perpetual Rule to the Church. But the faithful *Transmission* of them to future Ages might be sufficiently proved, upon the same Foot, and in the same Manner as the faithful *Transmission* of any other ancient Writings. So that it rests upon those who urge this Argument against the Books of the New Testament, to shew that those various Readings do at all affect the *Doctrines* of Christianity, or that such Variety in any one Place renders any one Doctrine doubtful, that is not fully and clearly delivered in other Parts of the New Testament. On the contrary, I believe it may be safely affirmed, that every single Copy would exhibit a true and just Account of Christianity; where there is an honest Disposition to learn, and (in order to that) to correct the Errors of Transcribers, by comparing Places of the same Import and Tendency with one another; making the usual Allowances for ordinary Slips of the Pen.

If the Number of various Readings in the New Testament, as they have been published from
Time

Time to Time by learned Men, should be granted to be greater than in other ancient Writings, as they are not; there are two things that would plainly account for it: The first, that the Copies which were taken of this Book before the Use of Printing, infinitely exceeded in Number the Copies of any other ancient Book whatsoever, and the more the Copies are, the more numerous of Course will the various Readings be: The second, that no ancient Writings whatsoever have been examined with the same Care, and the Copies collated with the like Exactness, and the various Readings set down even to a Difference as to Syllables, Letters, and Order of Words, as has been done in those of the New Testament; which greatly increases the *Number* of Readings, of how little *Importance* soever most of them may be. But at the same Time, it is very certain that the Number of Copies greatly *strengthens* the Authority of the Books, both by the Agreement of such vast Numbers fetched from all Parts of the World (just Allowance being made to the accidental Slips or Mistakes of Transcribers, which cause no material Alteration either in Sense or Doctrine,) and by the Light arising from the *Concurrence* of many Copies (such especially as are ancient) in one and the same Reading, by which we are enabled to determine the *true Reading* upon a sure Foundation. On the other Hand, when the Copies are few, the Errors of Transcribers in many Cases are not to be set right upon any other Foundation than mere Conjecture. This is the general Sense of learned Men, as being evidently founded upon Reason and Experience; and it appears to be so, from the great Endeavours that are used by all such

such as undertake to give correct Editions of ancient Authors, to procure as many *written* Copies as they can; and it also appears to be true in Fact, that where the Copies were few, Editions have been very faulty and imperfect; where many, very correct and accurate; and in both Cases more faulty or more correct, in Proportion to the Number of Copies, such especially as are of greatest Antiquity; in which Respect, as well as in the Numbers both of *Copies* and *Translations*, the New Testament has vastly the Advantage of all other ancient Writings whatsoever.

VI. *The Doctrines of the Apostles, contained in their Epistles, and in the Acts, together with what is taught by our Saviour in the Gospels, were designed to be a standing Rule of Faith and Manners to Christians in all Ages, and were from the Beginning considered and received as such by the Churches of Christ.*

That those Writings were *Designed* to be a standing and perpetual Rule of Faith and Manners, appears from what has already been proved; that is, from the Instruction, Commission, and Inspiration, which the Apostles received from Christ, together with the Power of working Miracles in Proof of their Commission from him: And all this, in order to their declaring and opening to Mankind the whole Gospel Dispensation, and every Part of it, and their perpetuating the Knowledge of it throughout all Generations to the End of the World. These were full and sufficient Declarations of the Will of Christ, That the whole Dispensation of his Gospel should be opened by them, and be received by the World as coming *from him,*

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who

who had thus instructed and enlightened them, and effectually secured them against Error and Mistake, and commissioned them to act in his Name, and ratified that Commission by Miracles, that no *Doubt* might remain, but that they were sent by him on Purpose to make a full and clear Discovery of that Dispensation to the World. And the necessary Consequence of this is, in the first Place, That whatever they delivered concerning the *Doctrines* and *Duties* belonging to that Dispensation, was to be received by all Christians as properly coming from Christ; and then, That no *other* Persons have been inspired and commissioned to publish the Will of Christ, but the Apostles only, what they published was the *Whole* of what he intended to be published. The contrary Suppositions plainly carry in them some one or more of these Absurdities, That Christ granted a Commission, without full Instructions for the Discharge of it; That Persons who acted under the Guidance of the Holy Ghost, did not discharge it faithfully; and, That all the While he was confirming their Doctrine by Miracles, he left them liable to Error. The Inference from all which would be, That he came down from Heaven to establish a new Religion, and empowered special Messengers to publish it to the World, but yet left Mankind to the End of the World under an Uncertainty what his religion was.

The Apostles, to give their Writings the Authority which justly belonged to them, generally declare themselves in the Beginning of their Epistles to be the *Apostles* and *Servants* of Jesus Christ, that is, Persons *sent* by him, and specially employed in his Service; and in other Parts of the
Epistles,

Epistles, to the same Effect, the *Ambassadors*, the *Stewards*, and the *Ministers* of Christ; all which Expressions imply, that they were the Persons he had appointed to convey his Will to Mankind, and to dispense to them the great Truths of the Gospel, which till then were unknown to the World.

¹ *Let a Man so account of us as of the Ministers of Christ and Stewards of the Mysteries of God.*—² *By whom we have received Grace and Apostleship, for Obedience to the Faith among all Nations for his Name.* And the same Apostle, speaking particularly of the Redemption wrought for us by Christ, and our Reconciliation to God by his Death, adds, ³ *And hath given to us the Ministry of Reconciliation, to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the World unto himself, not imputing their former Trespases unto them, and hath committed unto us the Word of Reconciliation: Now then we are Ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us.* And elsewhere, upon the same Subject, ⁴ *There is one God and one Mediator between God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a Ransom for all, to be testified in due Time: Whereunto I am ordained a Preacher and an Apostle, a Teacher of the Gentiles in Faith and Verity.* And again, ⁵ *The Minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the Gospel of God; and, ⁶ I am made a Minister of Christ, according to the Dispensation of God which is given to me, to fulfil (i. e. fully to preach) the Word of God.*

¹ 1 Cor. iv. 1. ² Rom. i. 5. ³ 2 Cor. v. 18,
19, 20. ⁴ 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6, 7. ⁵ Rom. xv. 16.
⁶ Col. i. 25.

Next, as to the *Doctrines* delivered, they are spoken of as to the *Commandments* of God and of Christ. ¹ *The Things that I write unto you are the Commandments of the Lord*; and the Gospel preached was the ² *Gospel of Christ*, and the ³ *Gospel of God*; ⁴ *the glorious Gospel of the Blessed God*, which, says St. Paul, was committed to my Trust. And the same St. Paul, writing to the *Thessalonians*, says, ⁵ *When ye received the Word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the Word of Men, but as it is in Truth the Word of God*. But when, upon a particular Occasion, he delivered only his own private sentiments, he expressly tells the *Corinthians*, ⁶ *I have no Commandment from the Lord, yet I give my Judgment*.

Next, as to the *Guidance* and *Direction* under which their Doctrine was delivered, it has been already ⁷ observed, That after the Apostles had received their Commission to declare and publish the Gospel to all Nations, they also received the Gift of the Holy Ghost, who should ⁸ *teach them all Things, and bring all Things to their Remembrance whatsoever Christ had said unto them*, and being the ⁹ *Spirit of Truth*, should guide them into all Truth. And so it is affirmed by St. Peter of them all, that they preached the Gospel ¹⁰ *with* (or by) the Holy Ghost *sent down from Heaven*; and it is said of the particular Doctrine, of the Gentiles being Fellow-Heirs with the Jews, that ¹¹ *it was*

¹ 1 Cor. xiv. 37. ² 2 Cor. ii. 12. ¹ 1 Thes. iii. 2.
³ Rom. xv. 16. ² 2 Cor. xi. 7. ¹ 1 Thes. ii. 2, 8, 9.
⁴ 1 Tim. i. 11. ⁵ 1 Thes. ii. 13. ⁶ 1 Cor. vii.
25. 40. ⁷ Page 168. ⁸ John xiv. 26. ⁹ —xvi.
13. ¹⁰ 1 Pet. i. 12. ¹¹ Ephes. iii. 5.

revealed to the holy Apostles and Prophets (in general) by the Spirit. It has also been before ¹ observed particularly of St. Paul, that he received his Doctrine by immediate Revelation; and tho' he was not of the Number of those upon whom the Holy Ghost descended upon the Feast of Pentecost, he declares in many Places of his Epistles, that he acted under the Guidance of the same Spirit: ² *We speak the Wisdom of God in a Mystery—the Things which God hath revealed unto us by his Spirit.—We have the Mind of Christ;—* ³ *He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not Man but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit.—* ⁴ *We have received, not the Spirit of the World, but the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the Things that are freely given us of God; which Things also we speak, not in the Words which Man's Wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth.* He tells the ⁵ *Corinthians*, that he will give them a Proof of Christ speaking in him; and describing the ⁶ *Order* in which the Dead are to rise again (*viz.* those who are dead, and those who shall be found alive at the general Resurrection) he declares, *This we say unto you by the Word of the Lord.* And St. Peter affirms, ⁷ that what St. Paul had written to the Christians, was according to the Wisdom given unto him; and in the same Place he sets St. Paul's Epistles upon the same Foot with the Scriptures of the *Old Testament*, which the Jewish Converts, to whom St. Peter was writing, did most firmly believe to be inspired.

¹ Page 175. ² 1 Cor. ii. 7, 10, 16. ³ 1 Thes. iv. 8. ⁴ 1 Cor. ii. 12, 13. ⁵ 2 Cor. xiii. 1, 3.
⁶ 1 Thes. iv. 15. ⁷ 2 Pet. iii. 15.

If it be said that these are the Testimonies of Persons concerning *themselves*, it is again to be remembered, that the Writers of the Epistle are the same Persons whom the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles testify to have been specially commissioned by Christ, and to have received from him the Gift of the Holy Ghost, and to have wrought many and great Miracles in his Name; and all this, on Purpose to qualify them for publishing his Gospel to the World, and to put it out of all Doubt that they were *Ministers* and *Ambassadors* sent by him, and that therefore entire Credit might be given to whatever they delivered in his Name, and their Doctrine be received by all Christians as a true and full Account of the Gospel Dispensation, or, in other Words, as a *Divine Rule* of Faith and Manners.

Accordingly, The Christians of the most early Ages, declared and asserted in the clearest Manner, that the Writings of the Apostles were divinely inspired, and that, as such, they became of Course a Rule to all Christians. ¹ *Clement*, a Fellow-Labourer of *St. Paul*, writes thus to the *Corinthians* :
 ‘ The Apostles delivered the Gospel to us, from
 ‘ our Lord Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ from
 ‘ God. Wherefore, Christ was sent by God, and
 ‘ the Apostles by Christ. Having therefore re-
 ‘ ceived their Instructions, and being confirmed
 ‘ in the Faith by the Word of God and the Ful-
 ‘ ness of the Holy Ghost; they went forth,
 ‘ preaching that the Kingdom of God was at
 ‘ Hand.’ And he bids them consider the Epistle
 of the blessed Apostle Paul, which was assuredly sent

¹ Clem. Ep. 1. ad Cor. §. 42, 47.

to them by the Assistance of the Spirit. ¹ Polycarp, the Disciple of St. John, says to the *Philippians* concerning St. Paul, *Being present he taught you the Word of Truth with all Exactness and Soundness; and being absent, wrote an Epistle to you, which if you look into, you may be built up in the Faith that was delivered unto you.* ² Theophilus of Antioch, in the second Century calls the Evangelists the *Bearers of the Spirit*; and says of the Prophets and Apostles, that they *spoke by one and the same Spirit.* ³ Irenæus, in the same Century, says, *That the Scriptures were dictated by the Word of God and his Spirit*; and, ⁴ *That one and the same Spirit preached in the Prophets, and published in the Apostles.* And he has one whole ⁵ Chapter, to shew that the other Apostles as well as Paul, had their Knowledge by *Revelation* from God. He particularly blames those as impious, who presumed to say, that the Apostles preached, before they had a perfect Knowledge of what they were to preach: For, says he, ⁶ *After our Lord was risen from the Dead, and they were endued by the Holy Ghost with Power from on high, they were filled with all Truths, and had perfect Knowledge, and then went forth into the Ends of the World, publishing the good Things which God hath provided for us, and preaching Peace from Heaven unto Men.* ⁷ Justin Martyr, in the same Century, speaks of the Scriptures, as Writings full of the *Holy Ghost*. In the next Century, ⁸ Clemens

¹ Polycarp. Ep. ad Philip. §. 3. ² Theoph. ad Autol. l. 3. ³ Iren. l. 2. c. 47. ⁴ Iren. l. 3. c. 25. ⁵ Iren. l. 3. c. 13. ⁶ Iren. l. 3. c. 1. ⁷ Justin Mart. Dial. with Trypho. ⁸ Clem. Alex. Strom. l. 5.

Alexandrinus says, *The Apostles might well be called Prophets and Righteous, one and the same Holy Spirit working in all*; and speaking of the Prophets and Apostles jointly, he says, ¹ *They had the Mind of the Prophetick and Instructing Spirit secretly revealed to them*; and he calls the Apostles, in particular, *Disciples of the Spirit*. ² *Origen* mentions the Gospels, as acknowledged to be of *Divine Authority* by all Churches; and speaking of the Inspiration of the Prophets, says, *That the same God inspired the Evangelists and Apostles*; and he mentions those sacred Books, as *not of Men, but from the Inspiration of the Holy Ghost, by the Will of the Father through Jesus Christ*; and says, *There is nothing in the Prophets, or the Law, or the Gospels, or the Apostles, (by which last is meant the Epistles) that is not from the Fulness of God*; and, *That there is an entire Harmony and Agreement between the Old Testament and the New, between the Law and the Prophets, between the Evangelical and Apostolical Writings, and between Apostolical Writings, with relation to one another*; and both he and others frequently style those Writings, *The Oracles of God, and, The Voice of God*.

What has been already said, and repeated, concerning the Commission which the Apostles received from Christ for publishing his Gospel to the World, and his enduing them for that End with the Holy Spirit, and with the Power of working Miracles; abundantly shews, that whatever they delivered concerning the Nature of that Institution, and the Doctrines and Duties properly belonging

¹ Clem. Alex. Strom. l. 1. ² Orig. in Joh. p. 4.
5. Philocal. p. 7, 11, 21, 30.

to it, was intended by Christ and his Apostles to be a *fixt and perpetual Rule* to the Christian Church. And as they intended it, so the first Christians *understood and received* it. The ¹ Gospels were read in their Assemblies, as Part of their publick Worship; The Exhortations of the Ministers delivered in the same Assemblies, were founded upon the Portions which had been read out of those Gospels; They began early to write *Commentaries* upon the Books of the New Testament, as upon a sacred Text; and Controversies were finally determined by what should appear upon Examination to be the true Meaning and Tenor of those Books. Upon this Foundation it is, that ² *Irenæus* attests the Truth of his own Doctrine against one of the Hereticks of that Time; *Let him, says he, examine what I have written; and he will find it consonant to the Doctrine of the Apostles, and exactly agreeable to what they taught.* The same ancient ³ Writer speaks of what the Apostles taught, as the *Rule of Truth*; and calls the Gospels the *Pillar and Foundation of the Church*; and says of the Apostles, *That the Church throughout the World grounding themselves upon their Doctrine, persevered in the self-same Sentiments concerning God and his Son.* And, ⁴ *We have not known the Methods of our Salvation from any others, than those by whom the Gospels came to us, which the Apostles preached, and afterwards, by the Will of God, delivered down to us in Writing, to be the Foundation and Pillar of our Faith.* He ⁵ charges the Hereticks with perverting both the

¹ Justin Mart. Apol. 2.

² Iren. l. 3. c. 12.

³ Iren. l. 3. c. 11, 12.

⁴ Iren. l. 3. c. 1.

⁵ Iren. l. 1. c. 7. 15.

Evangelical and Apostolical Writings to such Senses as might favour their own Doctrines, and with affirming the Things which neither the Prophets preached, nor Christ taught, nor the Apostles delivered: and that while they went beyond the Scriptures, ¹ they destroyed the Bounds of Truth. And so ² Tertullian; Take away from Hereticks their Pagan Doctrines, and let them refer their Questions to the Decision of the Scriptures, and they will not be able to stand. And elsewhere ³ he censures those as weak, who think they can discourse of Matters of Faith, otherwise than from the Books containing that Faith. To the same Purpose, ⁴ Clemens Alexandrinus says, Let us not content ourselves with the Testimonies of Men, but let us confirm that which comes in Question by the Word of God, which is to be credited beyond all Demonstrations; or rather is itself the only Demonstration.

Whether therefore we consider, what the Commission was which the Apostles received from Christ, or what the Gifts and Powers, by which they were enabled to discharge it; what they declared concerning their Authority and the Doctrine they delivered, or what the first Christians believed and declared concerning them; In all and every of these Views, we see the clearest Evidence that the Matters and Doctrines contained in the New Testament, as coming from Persons who were commissioned and inspired by Christ to publish his Religion to the World, were designed to be a *fixt and perpetual Rule* to Christians in all future

¹ Membra Veritatis. ² Tertull. de Resurrect. c. 3.

³ Tertull. de Præscrip. c. 15.

⁴ Clem. Alex.

Strom. l. 7.

Ages. And they were in Fact received under that Character by the first Christians, and, after the Increase of the Gospel, by particular Churches, gradually, as these Churches came to a certain Knowledge of the several Books being written by Persons divinely inspired; and in Process of Time, by the whole Christian Church; upon a full and general Conviction, that they were the Writings of such Persons, and that there was no just or reasonable Ground of Doubt, either about the Books, or the Writers of them. And, as I observed before, the Slowness and caution of particular Churches in giving Assent, is one good Argument that they were *faithful* and *impartial* Witnesses. So unjust have been the Suggestions of some, who yet bore no ill Will to Christianity, That all the Books of the New Testament became authentick *at once*, by a solemn Act of the Church, and that it was the Authority of the Church that made them a *Rule* or *Canon* to all Christians. On the contrary, particular Books were received by particular Churches, sooner or later, according to the Time of writing, and according to the different Opportunities they had of coming to the Knowledge of them, by Reason of the different Distance of Cities and Countries from one another, and the different Degrees of Correspondence among them. The Rule which determined them to admit the particular Books, was the Assurance they had, that they were written by Persons divinely inspired; and upon this (when it became clear to them upon due Enquiry and Examination,) they grounded the Authority of each Book. From henceforth, Writers cited the Books in Confirmation of the Doctrines and Duties of Christianity, and the People

considered them as a Divine Rule of Faith and Manners; both which we see as early as we have any of their Writings. And when by Degrees, every particular Church was satisfied that all the Books were written by Persons divinely inspired, they publickly *declared* their Satisfaction in Councils occasionally assembled to regulate the general Affairs of the Church. The Books were not therefore authentick, because those Declarations were made, but the Declarations were therefore made, because the Books were authentick; the Church being considered only as a *Witness* that they were written by the Persons whose Names they bear, and to whom they are ascribed, and from whose Inspiration they derive their Authority.

I am well aware, that in later Ages there have arisen Men who would confine the Christian Rule or Canon to the Writings of the Evangelists, and the Christian Faith to the single Article of believing *Jesus to be the Messiah*; this seeming to have been sufficient *at first* to gain Admittance into the Christian Church, and the Truth of that Proposition being abundantly attested by the four Gospels. But it was not rightly considered by those Men, how *extensive* that article was, and how many more it included in it; the Assent to it being, in Effect, an Acknowledgment that Jesus was the *Son of God*, and the Baptism received in vertue of that Assent, an Embracing of the Doctrine of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and both the Assent and the Baptism, a general Profession of taking Christ for their Master; and that Profession, a general Engagement to conform to all the Doctrines and Rules which he should deliver, either

either by himself or by Persons whom he should commission to make further Declarations of his Will. So that the Admission into the Church by Baptism upon the Belief of that single Article, was properly the admitting Persons into the *School* of Christianity, to be further *instructed* and *built up* in the Faith of Christ: and to consider such Admission in any other Light, is just as if one should argue that a Child is a complete Man, because he has all the Parts of a man, and will by due *Nourishment* and *Instruction* grow up gradually to the Stature and Knowledge of a perfect Man. This is the Light in which the Apostles of our Lord considered it. St. *Peter* writing to the Christians dispersed in several Parts of the World, directs them *as new-born Babes*, (as those who were yet tender and young in the Christian Faith) ¹ *to desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that they may grow thereby.* And St. *Paul* tells the Christians at *Corinth* to whom he spake ² as unto *Babes* in Christ, *I have fed you with Milk, and not with Meat, for hitherto ye were not able to bear it.* And when he reproves the *Hebrews* for their slow Progress in the Knowledge of the Christian Faith, he tells them; ³ *When for the Time ye ought to be Teachers, ye have need that one teach you again, which be the first Principles of the Oracles of God, and are become such as have need of Milk and not of strong Meat: For every one that uses Milk, is unskilful in the Word of Righteousness, for he is a Babe. But strong Meat belongeth to them that are of full Age, even those who by Reason of Use* (in the

¹ 1 Pet. ii. 2.² 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2.³ Heb. v.

12, 13, 14.

Margin it is *Habit or Perfection*) have their Senses exercised to discern both Good and Evil. From whence he immediately infers, ¹ *Therefore leaving the Principles (or first Rudiments) of the Doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto Perfection, not laying again the Foundation of Repentance from dead Works, and of Faith towards God; of the Doctrine of Baptisms, and of laying on of Hands, and of the Resurrection of the Dead, and of Eternal Judgment.*

A late ingenious Writer ², who has traced out the several Steps taken by Christ and his Apostles in the first Promulgation of the Gospel, had a true Notion of this, and calls the Proposition, That Jesus is the Messiah, the first *Entrance and Initiation* into the Christian Faith; and adds, *That in the Progress of the Gospel, the Apostles explained the Heads of the Christian Faith more fully and openly, to the End that at Length by their Preaching and Ministry, the whole Will and Council of God might be manifested; that is, all Things which ought to be believed and done to obtain eternal Life.* And speaking of the *Inspiration* ³ of the Apostles, he says, *The Holy Ghost was given them, not only to bring to their Remembrance whatever they had heard from Christ, but also, to add all such Things as were necessary to fill up and complete the Christian Doctrine.* He says ⁴ further, *That in the Acts of the Apostles we have the first Lineaments of a rising Church, and as it were the Ground-work of the Christian Faith;*

¹ Heb. vi. 1, 2.

² Dr. Burnet, late Master of the Charter House, in his Book *De Fide & Officiis*, p. 117.

³ Page 120.

⁴ Page 121.

and afterwards, where ¹ he describes the *gradual* Opening of the Gospel, he takes Notice, that the Apostles, *to whom was committed the Expounding of that new Revelation*, delivered some Doctrines sooner, and some later; and compares the Growth of the Christian Dispensation to that of a *Flower*, which opens itself gradually; and adds, ² that some of the *Mysteries* belonging to it were more seasonably delivered *after the first Seeds had taken Root*.

An ingenious ³ Person, who at his first Transition from Enquiries merely rational to those of Revelation, set himself to reduce the fundamental Doctrines of Christianity to the narrowest Compass he possibly could, seems not to have considered enough this *gradual Opening* of the Gospel Dispensation, when he made that one Article 'That Jesus is the Messiah' the Belief of which was no more than the *first Entrance* into the Christian Faith, to be the *Whole* of it; if he meant it in any other Sense than as it carried in it a general Acknowledgment, that they who made that Profession did thereby receive Christ for their Master, and were ready to embrace whatever Doctrines or Precepts should come from him, with a sincere Disposition to be instructed in them. And, in Truth, that he meant it in this Extent, and designed no more than a *speculative Enquiry* about the Nature of Fundamentals, seems plain from what he adds, ⁴ *That as for the rest of Divine Truths, there is nothing more required of a Christian, but that he receive all the Parts of Divine*

¹ Page 138. ² Page 139. ³ Mr. Lock's Reasonableness of Christianity. ⁴ Page 300.

Revelation with a Docility and Disposition prepared to embrace and assent to all Truths coming from God; and submit his Mind to whatsoever shall appear to him to bear that Character. This was all that could be required of the first Converts to Christianity, to whom the Gospel Dispensation was not yet opened; but it follows not from thence, that no more was *necessary* to be believed by Christians, *after* that Dispensation was fully opened. On the contrary, it follows, that an *actual* Belief of the Doctrines of the Gospel, *after* a full Declaration made of them, was as necessary to make Men Christians, as a *Readiness* and *Disposition* to receive them was *before*; and the Way by which both approved themselves to be true and sincere Christians, was an honest Disposition to embrace all the Light that was afforded them, whether by Christ himself, or by those whom he inspired and commissioned for the Opening and Publishing his Gospel to the World. And therefore the same Author speaking of the Apostles, and their Writings, says, ¹ *These Holy Writers, inspired from above, writ nothing but Truth, and in most Places very weighty Truths to us now, for the Expounding, Clearing, and Confirming of the Christian Doctrine.* And in his later Years, when he had more maturely considered the Frame and Tenor of the Gospel Dispensation, he calls the Writings of the New Testament, without Distinction, ² *Holy Scripture, Holy Writings, the Sacred Text, Writings dictated by the Spirit of God*; and says of the Writings of the Apostles, ³ *That the Doctrines*

¹ Page 297. ² Pref. to his Commentary.

³ Ibid.

contained in them tend wholly to the setting up the Kingdom of Jesus Christ in this World. Particularly, of St. Paul and his Epistles, upon several of which he wrote a very useful and elaborate Commentary during his Retirement in his last Years, he says, *That as to this Apostle, ¹ he had the whole Doctrine of the Gospel from God by immediate Revelation; that for his Information in the Christian Knowledge, and the Mysteries and Depths of the Dispensation of God by Jesus Christ, God himself had condescended to be his Instructor and Teacher; and that he had received the Light of the Gospel from the Fountain and Father of Light himself; and as to his Epistles, ² That they were dictated by the Spirit of God.* In his Preface to the Commentary upon the Epistle to the Romans, after having enumerated some of the Particulars in which that Epistle opens the Gospel Dispensation to Mankind, he adds, *These are but some of the more general and more comprehensive Heads of the Christian Doctrine to be found in this Epistle. The Design of a Synopsis will not permit me to descend more minutely to Particulars; but this let me say, that he that would have an enlarged View of true Christianity, will do well to study this Epistle.* To induce Men to the Study of the New Testament in general, he says, ³ *The only Way to be preserved from Error, is to betake ourselves in Earnest to the Study of the Way to Salvation in those Holy Writings wherein God has revealed it from Heaven, and proposed it to the World; seeking our Religion where we are sure it is in Truth to be found.* And, in a

¹ Ibid. p. 16.² Ibid. p. 17.³ Ibid. p. 24.
Letter

¹ Letter written the Year before his Death, to one who had asked him this Question, What is the shortest Way to attain to a true Knowledge of the Christian Religion in the *full and just Extent* of it? His Answer is, *Study the Holy Scriptures, especially the New Testament; therein are contained the Words of eternal Life: It has God for its Author, Salvation for its End, and Truth without any Mixture of Error for its Matter.* And of St. Paul's Epistles, which he was more particularly led to speak of in the Preface to his Commentary, he says, That the Studying and Understanding them aright, will make those who do it to *rejoice in the Light they receive from those most useful Parts of Divine Revelation.*

This Writer also furnishes us with an Answer to the Objection usually made by Infidels and Scepticks, That if the Epistles were written upon particular *Occasions* only, they would not have been written at all if those occasions had not happened, and that therefore the Christian Faith was *completely* delivered before, in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. ² *The Providence of God,* says he, *bath so ordered it, that St. Paul has writ a great Number of Epistles* [and the same is true of those that were written by *other Apostles*] *which though upon different Occasions, and to several Purposes, yet are all confined within the Business of his Apostleship, and so contain nothing but Points of Christian Instruction; amongst which he seldom fails to drop in and often to enlarge upon the great and distinguishing Doctrines of our Holy Religion.* If

¹ Posthum. Works, p. 344. ² Pref. to Comment. p. 21.

the Writing of the Epistles was ordered by the *Providence* of God, the same Providence certainly intended, that they should be a *Rule* and *Direction* to the Christian Church; and if the Providence of God had not so ordered it, that the Epistles should be written, the same Providence would have found out some *other Way* to open and explain the Christian Revelation in the Manner they have done. The Question therefore is not, what the State of Things would have been if the Epistles had *not* been written, (which no Mortal can tell,) but the only Question is, how the Matter stands now they are written, and whether we are at Liberty to consider them otherwise than as Openings and Explanations of the Christians Doctrine, when they come from Persons divinely inspired and commissioned by Christ to publish his Gospel to the World; in virtue of which (as the other ¹ Writer before mentioned has truly said) they were enabled and empowered *to add all such Things as were necessary to fill up and compleat the Christian Doctrine.*

Whatever therefore we find in the Writings of the Apostles that concerns the Doctrine and Oeconomy of the Christian Dispensation, whether it be further *Explanations* of what is more generally delivered in the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles, or *Additions* to them; it is what they were empowered by Christ, and enabled by the Holy Ghost to deliver to the World, and so became a Rule of Faith and Practice to Christians to the End of the World. Such are these that follow; The Misery brought upon Mankind by the Fall of

¹ Burn. de Fide, &c. p. 120.

Adam, and the Deliverance out of that Misery as wrought for us by Christ: The Insufficiency of the Mosaical Law for obtaining Salvation: The typical Nature of the Ceremonial Law as prefiguring Christ, the End of that Law and our great Sacrifice, High-priest and Law-giver: The *outward* Performances of the Ceremonial Law, represented as Emblems of *inward* Purity: The Excellency of the Sacrifice, Ministry, and Laws of Christ, beyond those of the Mosaical Dispensation: The Efficacy of the Death of Christ and of the whole Gospel Dispensation, for obtaining Pardon of Sin, Reconciliation to God, and Eternal Life: The Union of the divine and human Nature in Christ: The Necessity — of his *Incarnation*, to be first a Teacher and Example, and after that to be capable of dying; of his *Death*, to take away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself; of his *Resurrection*, to prove his Conquest over Death, and to be an Earnest of our rising from the Dead; and of his *Ascension*, to be vested with all Power in Heaven and Earth, and to be our Mediator, Advocate and Intercessor at the Right-hand of his Father: The Universality and Sufficiency of the Grace promised in the Gospel, decreed by God from the Foundation of the World, and revealed in due Time in the Gospel, for the Salvation of all true Believers: The Right of Gentiles as well as Jews, to be Partakers of the Mercies and Benefits of the Gospel Covenant in Christ: The Justice of God in rejecting the unbelieving Jews, and calling the Gentiles: The Necessity of Faith in him, in order to our Justification in the Sight of God, and the Impossibility of obtaining Salvation in any other Way than through the Atonement made by him: The
Efficacy

Efficacy of Faith, and the Necessity of good Works, as the genuine Fruits of a true and lively Faith: The Sanctification of our Nature by the Spirit of God: The ordinary Operations and Influences of the Holy Spirit; and the Obligation to Love, Peace, Meekness, Gentleness, and mutual Forbearance, and the Fruits of the Spirit; The Power and Vigilance of our Enemy the Devil and his wicked Spirits; and the great Sinfulness of Envy, Detraction, Malice, Hatred and Revenge, as properly the Works of the Devil: The Duty of doing all Things to the Glory of God, by employing our several Gifts and Talents for that End: The Duty of Repentance from dead Works, of dying to Sin and living to God, and of putting on the new Man, and living, not according to the Flesh but according to the Spirit: The Duties of Mortification and Self-denial, in order to the Subduing our inordinate Lusts and Appetites: The absolute Necessity of Holiness, and the utter Inconsistency of Uncleanness of all Kinds with the Purity of the Gospel: The Duty of preserving the Bond of Marriage sacred and inviolable: The Nature of the Church of Christ upon Earth, and the Communion of Christians with him as their Head, and with one another as Joint Members of his Body: The true Import, due Administration, and proper Efficacy of the Ordinances instituted by him: The Government of his Church, and the Appointment of Pastors and Teachers therein, to minister in holy Things, and to explain to the People the Doctrines of Christianity, and enforce the Duties of it: The publick Worship and Discipline appointed in his Church, the first to be attended, and the second to be submitted

ted to by all Christians: The Necessity of Union among the Members of Christ's Church, and the great Mischief of Divisions: The Duty of praying for the Wants of *one another* both spiritual and temporal: The due Regulation of religious Zeal, and the Danger of a misguided Zeal: The Duty of Preaching, and taking up the Cross of Christ, and the Mischief of corrupting the Christian Faith by Philosophy and the Wisdom of this World: The extreme Danger of Infidelity and Apostasy from the Faith: The distinguishing Reward of those who suffer patiently for the Truth of the Gospel, and persevere unto the End: The Relation which good Christians bear to the Saints in Heaven, while they continue upon Earth: The great Happiness that is there laid up for all the faithful Servants of Christ: The Order of the general Resurrection, and the Changes that will be then made in the Bodies of good Men.

These and the like Heads of Doctrine and Instruction which are found in the Epistles, being added to the Light which we receive from the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles, give us a compleat View of the Christian Dispensation and every Branch of it; the one being the Foundation, and the other the Superstructure, and both necessary to build us up in the true Faith and Doctrine of Christ. And whether these be all equally necessary to be explicitly known and believed, or all equally fundamental, is an useless and idle Enquiry. Whoever reads the Writings of the Apostles, and is persuaded that the Doctrines they delivered were received from Christ, or written by the Direction and Assistance of his Holy Spirit, cannot but think himself obliged to believe and do whatever he

he finds delivered in these Writings, and to consider them as a divine Rule of Faith and Practice.

As to the Duties merely moral, and such as belong to our several Stations and Circumstances in this World, no Infidel has ever been so hardy as to deny that the Epistles contain a Variety of admirable Precepts and Directions for our Conduct and Behaviour in the several Relations of Life (for Magistrates and People, Wives and Husbands, Parents and Children, Masters and Servants) and also in the several *Conditions* and Circumstances of Life, Riches and Poverty, Health and Sicknefs, Prosperity and Adversity. Nor need I repeat here what I have shewn at large ¹ elsewhere, That these and the like Duties, as laid down and enjoyned in those Sacred Writings, are not only carried to higher Degrees of Perfection than they ever were in the Schools of Morality, but also have far greater *Weight* here, as having the Stamp and Sanction of Divine Authority, and as they are enforced by Considerations relating to our eternal Happiness in the next Life, and by Motives immediately resulting from our Relation to Christ, and from the general Doctrines and Principles of the Christian Faith.

It is true, that the *immediate Occasion* of several of the Epistles, was the correcting Errors and Irregularities in particular Churches and Countries. Such were ' The corrupting Christianity with Mixtures of Judaism and Philosophy, Apostasy from the Faith they had received, Contentions and Divisions among themselves, Neglect of the

¹ Second Past. Lett. p. 130.

publick Assemblies and Misbehaviour in them, The despising of Government, The dishonouring of Marriage, The allowing Fornication, &c. And God knows our own Times are a sad Instance of the Necessity of such Cautions in all Ages, and the no less Necessity of attending to the Duties which are directly opposite to those Vices and Irregularities, and which the Apostles take *Occasion* from thence to lay down and enforce. And even their Decisions of Cases concerning Meats and Drinks, and the Observation of the Ceremonial Law, and other like Doubts, which were peculiar to the Jewish Converts in the first *Occasion* of them; these Rules also are, and always will be, our surest Guides in all Points relating to Christian Liberty, and the Use of Things indifferent; when the Grounds of those Decisions, and the Directions consequent upon them, are duly attended to, and applied to Cases of the like Nature by the Rules of Piety and Prudence; or, as a learned Writer expresses it, *By Analogy and Parity of Reason*, those may be extended very profitably to the general *Behoof and Advantage* of other Churches of God, and particular Christians of all Ages; especially, in one Point which is of universal Concern in Life, I mean, The Duty of abstaining from many Things which are in themselves innocent, if we foresee that they will give Offence to weak Christians, or be the Occasion of leading others into Sin.

The Sum then of the Sixth Head is this; ' That the Apostles were entrusted by Christ with the making a full and entire Publication of his Gospel,

1 Dr. Hammond.

and

and inspired by the Holy Ghost, to enable them to discharge that Trust: That the Books of the New Testament were all written or ¹ approved by them: ' That Christians in all Ages have thought themselves obliged to consider and understand the Nature of the Gospel Dispensation, as they found it explained by Persons thus authorized and inspired: and, ' That as soon as the several Books of the New Testament appeared upon clear and evident Proof to be written by the Persons whose Names they bore, all Christian Churches received them as Inspired Writings, and as a Divine Rule of Faith and Manners.

The Inference from all this, which every one, who is a Christian in Earnest, ought to make to himself, is, To consider it as his indispensable Duty to *peruse* and *attend* to those sacred Books, as explaining to him the Terms of Salvation according to the Gospel Covenant, and acquainting him with the Conditions required on his part in order to obtain it. And because the Books of the *Old Testament* are also the Oracles of God delivered from Time to Time to the Jewish Nation, and are declared by the New Testament to be written by Divine Inspiration, and do contain in them many excellent Lessons of Duty, and a great Variety of Mercies and Judgments sent upon Men and Nations, according to their Obedience or Disobedience to the Commands of God, and also the Accounts of God's Communications with Mankind, and his Dealings with them, from the Creation of the World; together with a Treasure of Devotions and Meditations of all Kinds and for

¹ The Gospels of Mark and Luke. See p. 153.

all Conditions, especially in the Book of Psalms; Let me therefore further intreat you, carefully to peruse those sacred Writings; frequently and seriously meditating upon the various Providences and Dispensations of God to men, and learning from thence to praise and adore his Power, Wisdom, Justice, and Goodness, and to be careful above all Things to recommend yourselves to his Favour and Protection by a strict and uniform Obedience to his laws. What St. Paul says of ¹ Timothy, is a high Commendation of him: *From a Child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto Salvation through Faith which is in Christ Jesus: And then he adds, All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness: That the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good Works.* And as God ² has caused all Holy Scriptures (both of the Old and New Testament) to be written for our Learning, as the ³ Liturgy of our Church expresses it; be you always careful, that (in the Words of the same Liturgy) *you do in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by Patience and Comfort of his holy Word, you may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed Hope of everlasting Life, which he hath given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ.*

TO CONCLUDE.

In this and my two former Letters, I have given you a View of the Christian Religion, and

¹ 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16, 17.

² 1 Cor. x. 11.

³ Collect for second Sunday in Advent.

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the Evidences of the Truth of it, in as short a Compass, and in the plainest Manner, I was able; with an Eye, throughout, to the present Attempts of Infidels against our common Faith, and with a sincere Desire to preserve you from the *Infection*, and to *Establish* you in that Faith. I have shewn you, ‘ That the Revealed Will of God is your *only* sure Guide in the Way to Salvation; ‘ That a full Revelation of his Will, concerning the Methods and Terms of your Salvation, is contained in the Writings of the New Testament; ‘ That those Writings are genuine and authentick, and have been faithfully transmitted to us; and, ‘ That if you neglect the Means of Salvation which God has appointed, and seek for it in any other Way, you will not only fail of it in the End, but likewise render yourselves inexcusable in his Sight. I beseech you therefore to weigh and consider what I have written for your Use, with such Seriousness, Attention, and Impartiality, as the *Importance* of these Things most manifestly requires and deserves; and to take great care that your Enquiries after Truth be wholly free from the Influences of Profit or Pleasure, Pride, or Passion, and from all Views and Considerations whatsoever, except a sincere Desire and Intention to *Know* and *Do* the Will of God, in order to secure your eternal Salvation. And that, in the Pursuit of this great Work, your own Endeavours may be ever accompanied with the Divine Direction and Assistance, is the hearty and utmost Prayer of,

Your Faithful Friend and Pastor,

Edm’. London’.



The Bishop of *London's*
Fourth Pastoral Letter, &c.

By Way of Caution

Against LUKEWARMNESS on one hand,
and ENTHUSIASM on the other.



THE three Letters which I addressed to you some Years since, related chiefly to *Principle*, and were designed to establish you in a firm Belief of the Christian Revelation against an uncommon Diligence and Endeavour, at that Time, to lead you into *Infidelity*.

At present, what I have to say to you, relates chiefly to *Practice*, and concerns those only who believe and profess the Christian Religion; but who,

who, mistaking the true Nature and Design of it, are apt to fall into the Extremes of *Lukewarmness* on one hand, or *Enthusiasm* on the other. And both these Mistakes being greatly prejudicial to Religion, and dangerous to the Souls of Men; I may well be justified, and especially at *this* Time, in a well-meant Endeavour to preserve you from both; by setting before you the great Evil of each, and letting you see, that true Christianity lies in the middle Way between them.

Caution against LUREWARMNESS.

BY *Lukewarmness*, I mean an Opinion and Persuasion, that if Men go to Church as others do, and give the common Attention to the Business of their Stations, and keep themselves from Sins of a gross and notorious Nature, and are no way hurtful or injurious to their Neighbours; they are as good Christians as they need be. By these, they reckon their Salvation sufficiently provided for, without any Endeavour to grow better, and without examining their Hearts upon what Motives and Aims they act; "Whether the Evil they abstain from, and the Good they do, be owing to a Sense of Duty to God, and a View to a future Reward in the next World, or only to the Fear of Man, and the avoiding of Shame and Reproach in this: "Whether, in attending to the Business of their Station, they act under a Sense of Duty to God who has placed them in it, or have no higher Motive or Aim, than the carrying on their *worldly* Views: "Whether they are, on all Occasions,

as ready to *help* their Neighbours, as they are fearful to *hurt* them; and nether *covet* any thing they enjoy, nor envy them the Enjoyment of it:

“ Whether they find any Degree of *Delight* in attending the publick Worship of God, and *endeavour* before-hand to put their Hearts into a proper Frame for Attention and Edification:

“ Whether they satisfy themselves, that they have a real *Relish* of Devotion, by praying in *Private*, as well as in *Publick*: And, “ Whether at the same Time, that they abstain from the Sins of a gross and more heinous Nature *themselves*, they shew a serious Dislike of them in *others*, and find an inward Concern at the Dishonour that is done to God and his Laws.

By these Tests every one may judge of the *Progress* he has made in the Christian Life; and if he find none of those Things within him, but that he has hitherto contented himself with a bare bodily Attendance upon the publick Worship of God, and the following his daily Employment on other Days, and with abstaining from the more gross and notorious Acts of Sin, and from doing any hurt or Injury to his Neighbour, and has rested finally upon these, as the *Whole* that Christianity requires of him; such an one is to conclude himself to be as yet in a very *imperfect* State, or, in other Words, in the Number of the *Luke-warm*. A State, that is the more dangerous to the Souls of Men, as it is usually accompanied with a Persuasion, that they are as good as they need be, and, under that Persuasion, are not like to think of growing better. And there is the greater Danger of their being led to think too *favourably* of their Condition, in an Age which af-
fords

fords them so many Examples of *open* and *notorious* Wickedness of all Kinds, and of a *total* Neglect of the publick Worship of God ; with whom they are more willing to compare themselves, (thanking God, that they are *not like* other Men) than with those about them, who have made a greater Proficiency in the Christian Life than they have done. Whereas, in Truth, neither the one nor the other ought to be the *Rule* of judging of our spiritual Condition. The only Rule of that Judgment is, the *Holy Scripture* ; and especially, the *State* of Christianity, as laid down by Christ and his Apostles, and delivered to us in the Writings of the New Testament ; in which the Life of a Christian, in every Part of it, is described in so plain and clear a Manner, that none, who resolve to make it their *Rule* of judging, can possibly believe that the lukewarm State, as described above, is that *Measure* of Goodness, which the Christian Religion requires.

And that none of you may rest in that *lukewarm* State, but every one may resolve to proceed forward to a State that is truly *religious*.

C O N S I D E R,

1. *That a personal Presence in the Church, without Attention and Devotion, is not an Act of Religion, nor such a Discharge of Duty, as is at all pleasing to God. It is rather an Offence to him, and justly accounted an hypocritical Service, to draw nigh to him with your Lips, when your Heart is far from him. On the contrary, the repairing to the Place of publick Worship, out of a Sense of Duty, and joining seriously with the Congregation in the Prayers and Praises of the Church,*

and attending carefully to the Instructions which are there delivered, is not only the Performance of a Service acceptable to God, but moreover it imprints upon the mind an habitual sense of Religion; and this, the more lasting, if it be kept alive, as it ought to be, by the Practice of Devotion in *private*. And doubt not, but a serious and regular Attendance upon the Ordinances of God, will be blessed by him with such Supplies of Grace and Strength, as he sees needful for you; though you are not sensible, at what Times, and in what Manner they are conveyed.

2. *That the several Stations in Life, together with the Duties belonging to them, are to be considered as God's Appointment; and that a willing Acquiescence in the Station wherein his Providence hath placed you, and a diligent Attendance on the Duties belonging to it as appointed by him, is in the strictest Sense, THE SERVING OF GOD.* This is what the Scripture means, when it directs the several Offices of Life to be performed *as to the Lord and not unto Men*. If the Work be done only to please Men, or from a Fear of their Displeasure, no Service is done to God, nor any Reward to be expected from him. But, on the other hand, the doing it out of Regard to God, and in a dutiful Compliance with his Appointment, is not only a great Support and Refreshment to the Mind under the most difficult and laborious Employments; but which is of far greater Moment, it turns the most common Offices of Life into Acts of Religion. The Care that the ² Gospel

¹ Col. iii. 23. ² 1 Theff. iv. 11. 2 Theff. iii. 11, 12. 1 Tim. v. 13. Ephes. v. 22, &c. Colos. iii. 18, &c.

has taken, to inculcate the general Duty of *Diligence* in our Stations, and to acquaint us with the particular Duties belonging to the chief Relations in Life, of Husband and Wife, of Parents and Children, of Masters and Servants, is a sufficient Intimation to us, how great a Part of the Christian Life consists in a regular and *conscientious* Discharge of those Duties. And how pleasing this is to God, we learn from St. Paul; who having particularly enumerated those Relations, with the Duties belonging to each, and commanded them to be done *heartily, as to the Lord and not unto Men*, immediately adds, *Knowing, that of the Lord ye shall receive the Reward of the Inheritance, for ye serve the Lord Christ.*

3. That one main Design of God, in annexing particular Duties to the various Stations in this Life, is to make Trial of our Obedience in order to another. We are now in a State of Probation; and the great Proofs of our Obedience to God are, 'The Pursuing the Business and Designs of this World under a due *Subordination* to his Laws, and Submission to his Will; 'The enjoying the Blessings of Life, under a just Sense of the Hand from which they come, and of the much greater Blessings he has in Store for good Men in another World; in a Word, 'The conducting all our worldly Affairs like those who are sensible, that it is God who has appointed us the Work, and that he will reward our diligent Attendance upon it. But when any one confines his Views to this World, and lives as if he had no Dependance upon God in carrying on his Designs, and considers not the

Colos. iii. 24.

Connection there is between the Business of Life in this World, and his *Condition* in another ; we are not to wonder, that in such an one, the Sense of God and Religion wears off apace.

4. *That as this Life is a State of Probation, in which God is training us up for another ; he expects from us Improvements in Goodness of all Kinds, and fresh Proofs of Obedience to him, in Proportion to the Time he allows us in this World, and the Opportunities he gives in the Course of it.* The Want of considering this is, without Doubt, one great Cause of *Lukewarmness* in Religion. When Men think they are good enough already, they have no Concern but to keep themselves from growing worse ; not being sensible of the *imperfect* State they are in, nor considering that there is no such Thing as a *Stand* in Religion. If they are not going *forward*, they are certainly going *backward*. And from hence arises the Duty of Self-Examination, and of comparing our Lives with the Rules of the Gospel, to let us see the Truth of our Condition, whether we are going backward or forward ; and, by shewing us our Failings and Imperfections, to excite us to watch and pray against them, and to enter into Resolutions of better Improvement for the Time to come ; a Work very proper at all Times, but more especially when we are to renew our Covenant with God in the Holy Sacrament.

5. *That there are Sins of Omission, as well as Sins of Commission.* It is not enough, that you do no Hurt or Injury to your Neighbour, unless you be ready to take all proper Opportunities of doing him *good*. It is not enough, that you refrain from casting unjust Censures upon him, unless

less you be ready to vindicate his good Name, when you hear him unjustly censured by others. It is not enough, that you refrain from doing Dishonour to God, yourselves, unless you shew a becoming Zeal to discountenance it in others. It is not enough, that a Magistrate, Parent or Master, be regular in their own Lives, unless they exert the Authority which God has given them, to punish and restrain Irregularities in those, whom his Providence has put under their Power and Government. The *Commission of Sin* is in its Nature more daring, and usually attended with a greater *Degree of Guilt*, than the *Omission of Duty*. But since the Duties of Life are the Commands of the same God who forbids the Sins; it is strange to see, with what Indifference the *Omissions of Duty* are looked upon by lukewarm Christians, and how little Sense there is of the *Guilt* of forgetting and neglecting them.

6. *That the Rules and Measures of Duty must be taken from the Word of God, and not from the Opinions of the World.* Anger, Malice, Envy, and other Qualities of the like Nature, pass among Men for little more than Frailties and Infirmities; but if you look into the ¹ New Testament, you will find them ranked among Sins of the most heinous Nature, and most inconsistent with the Christian Life; and the contrary Duties of Love, and Meekness, and Forgiveness, recommended and insisted on, as essential to Christianity. Nor is it less dangerous to trust to the Opinion of the World concerning the *Goodness* of your Actions;

¹ Ephes. iv. 31. Colos. iii. 8, 12. Gal. v. 22,

which depends not so much upon the outward Appearance, as upon the inward *Motives* and *Principles* upon which you act; and these can be known to none but God and yourself. In either of these Cases, if you take your Estimate from the Opinion of the World, you run the Hazard of being greatly deceived; and may reckon your Condition very good, when you are at best but in a very imperfect and lukewarm Way.

7. *That the evil Thoughts and Intentions of the Heart, when entertained, harboured, and approved there, have the same Guilt in the Account of God, as if they were carried into Execution.* He sees every Motion of the Heart, and judges of Men by the *Disposition* and *Designs* he finds there. If there be first a *willing Mind*, he accepts and rewards according to what a Man hath, and not according to what he hath not. So, by the same Rule, if there be a *Mind willing to sin*, and only a Want of Power or Opportunity to execute, he condemns and punishes as if it were actually committed.

8. *That the strictest Observance of one Branch of Duty will not atone for the Neglect of another.* True Religion consists in a due Regard to every Branch of Duty, to be performed and attended in their *proper Seasons*. The Attendance upon the Business of Life will not excuse the Neglect of God's Worship; nor will the Attendance on God's Worship excuse the Neglect of the Business of Life. Much less will a Zeal in one Branch of Duty, which happens to be agreeable to our Inclinations, atone for a Neglect of other Branches to which our Natures are more averse. Every Branch of Duty is equally commanded by God,
and

and all, as such, are equally binding; and our Obedience to him is *chiefly* shown in an Observance of those Duties to which corrupt Nature is averse, and an Abstinence from those Sins to which it is inclined. And there is not a Mistake that is either more dangerous or more absurd, than to flatter one's self, that the greatest Diligence about some *Duties* which God has commanded, will atone for the Enjoyment of *Sins* which he has as expressly forbidden.

You will observe, without my telling you, that the Design of what I have hitherto written, has been, 'To shew lukewarm Christians how imperfect a State they are in, and wherein the Imperfections of it consist: 'To point out to them the several Mistakes about Religion and the Duties of it, which are apt to lead Men into that State, and confirm them in it: 'To satisfy those who are engaged in the Cares and Business of the World, that they can never want Opportunities to serve God and approve themselves to him, since a Religious State is so far from being inconsistent with the ordinary Employments of Life, that a great Part of Religion consists in a *diligent* and *conscientious* Attendance upon the Business of the Station in which Providence hath placed them: And finally, 'To excite them, so far as their Station and Condition will fairly admit, to a serious Use of such other Offices and Exercises of Religion, publick and private, as tend to their Spiritual *Improvement*, and to carry them on from one Degree of Goodness to another.

Let the several Rules I have laid down, agreeably to the Sense of Scripture, be seriously attended to, and the Course to which they direct,
be

be entered upon, and pursued in Earnest; and they have no Reason to doubt, but that they are in the Number of those who are *God's Servants*, and live in *his Fear*, and are growing up more and more into a *Love* of their Duty, and by Consequence into a *Love* of God. Nor need they any other Evidence, besides those good *Dispositions* they find in their Hearts, that the holy Spirit of God co-operates with their honest Endeavours to subdue Sin and grow in Goodness; nor that, persevering in their Course, and praying to God for his Assistance, and relying upon the Merits of Christ for the Pardon of all such Sins, Failings, and Imperfections, as are, more or less, unavoidable in this mortal State, they will be accepted and rewarded of God, according to the Degree and Measure of Goodness to which they have arrived in this Life.

And as for those, to whom God has given greater Degrees of Leisure from the Business of Life, to attend to Reading, Prayer, and other Exercises and Offices of Religion; they must remember, that he will expect from them greater *Improvements* in Purity and Goodness, suitable to the special *Advantages* and *Opportunities* which he bestowed upon them. And among those may well be reckoned, the Provisions made in these two great Cities for *Daily Prayers* in the Church; which are attended by many serious Christians, to their great spiritual Benefit, and might be attended by many more, without Prejudice to Health, or Hindrance to Business.

Caution

Caution against ENTHUSIAM,

THE other Extreme, into which some serious and well-meaning Christians are apt to be lead, is ENTHUSIASM, or a strong Persuasion on the Mind, that they are guided in an *extraordinary* Manner, by immediate *Impulses* and *Impressions* of the Spirit of God. And this is owing chiefly to the Want of distinguishing aright between the *ordinary* and *extraordinary* Operations of the holy Spirit.

The *extraordinary* Operations were those, by which the Apostles and others, who were entrusted with the first Propagation of the Gospel, were enabled to work Miracles, and speak with Tongues, in Testimony that their Mission and Doctrine were from God. But these have long since ceased; and the ordinary Gifts and Influences of the Spirit which still continue, are conveyed in a different Manner, and for Ends and Uses of a more private Nature; and, however real and certain in themselves, are no otherwise *discernible* than by their *Fruits* and *Effects*, as these appear in the *Lives* of Christians.

No one, who reads the *New Testament*, can possibly be ignorant, that a Belief of the *ordinary* Influence of the Spirit of God, is a necessary Part of the Christian Faith. Regeneration, or a New-birth, as wrought by the Spirit, is that which every one receives at his *first* Entrance into the Christian Covenant. It is our Saviour's express Declaration, *That except a Man be born again of Water and*

¹ John iii. 5.

of the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God; and St. Paul, to the same Purpose. ¹ That according to his Mercy he saved us, by the washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. And the same Apostle, speaking of our natural Corruptions, adds, ² But we are washed, but we are sanctified, but we are justified, in the Name of our Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. And elsewhere, with regard to the daily Conversation of a Christian, he speaks of our ³ living in the Spirit, and walking in the Spirit, and ⁴ being quickened by the Spirit, and ⁵ led by the Spirit, as that by which we are enabled to proceed successfully in our Christian Course. And our Saviour encourages us to pray to God for his *holy Spirit*, by assuring us, that he is always most ready to give it to those *who ask*.

After these and the like Declarations in the *New Testament*; it is a strange Supposition, that the Generality of Christians are *as yet* unapprized, either of the Truth and Reality of a *Regeneration* and *New-birth*, or of the Influence of the *holy Spirit* in our Christian Course. And no less strange would it be, to find any one who has attended to the Book of *Common Prayer*, suggesting, or listning to *Suggestions*, as if the publick Service and Offices of our Church were wanting and defective in a Regard to those Doctrines.

As to the Doctrine of *Regeneration* and a *New-birth*: In the *Collect* on the Nativity of Christ, our Church prays thus: "Grant that we being
" *regenerate*, and made thy Children by Adop-

¹ Tit. iii. 5.
16, 25.

² 1 Cor. vi. 11.
⁴ Rom. viii. 14.

³ Gal. xv.
⁵ Luke xi. 14.

tion and Grace, may be daily renewed by thy *holy Spirit.*" And this is agreeable to the Language of our Liturgy, in the Form of Baptism. There we pray, "That the Infant may receive Remission of his Sins, by *spiritual Regeneration*: That God will give him his *holy Spirit*, that he may be *born again*, and be made an Heir of everlasting Salvation; and we thank God for *regenerating* this Infant by his *holy Spirit.*" On which Account, Baptism is called "in the Church-Catechism, 'a *New-birth* unto Righteousness; and in the Office of *Confirmation*, with regard to that New-birth, we thank God for having *regenerated* the Persons by Water and the *Holy Ghost.*" And they who think themselves the most knowing in the Point of Regeneration and New-birth, will not be able to give a better Description of it, than that which is given to their Hands in our Church-Catechism. There, under the Head of Baptism, after what relates to the outward visible Sign or Form; the next Question is, What is the inward and spiritual Grace? To which, this is the Answer; *A Death unto Sin, and a New-birth unto Righteousness; for being by Nature born in Sin, and the Children of Wrath, we are hereby made the Children of Grace.*

No less unjust would it be to suggest, that the publick Service and Offices of our Church are in the least regardless of the *Gifts and Graces* of the holy Spirit.

In the DAILY SERVICE, we pray to God—
 "to grant us true Repentance and his *holy Spirit*,
 "rit,"——"to replenish the King with the
 "Grace of his *holy Spirit*,"——"To endue the
 "Royal Family with his *holy Spirit*"——"to
 "send

“ send down upon our Bishops and Curates, and
 “ all Congregations committed to their Charge,
 “ *the healthful Spirit of his Grace* — That the
 “ Catholick Church may be guided and governed
 “ *by his good Spirit*; and that the Fellowship of
 “ the *Holy Ghost* may be ever with us.”

In the LITANY, we pray, “ That God will
 “ endue us with the Grace of his *holy Spirit*,
 “ and that we may all bring forth *the Fruits of the*
 “ *Spirit*.”

In the COLLECTS, we pray, ‘ That God will
 grant us the true Circumcision of the *Spirit*; that
 our Hearts and all our Members being mortified
 from all worldly and carnal Lusts, we may in all
 Things obey his blessed Will — ‘ That God
 will send his *Holy Ghost*, and pour into our Hearts
 the most excellent Gift of Charity — ‘ That
 we may ever obey the godly *Motions of the Spirit*
 in Righteousness and true Holiness — ‘ That
 by his *holy Inspiration* we may think those Things
 that be good, and by his merciful Guiding may
 perform the same — ‘ That God will not
 leave us comfortless, but send to us his *Holy*
Ghost to comfort us — ‘ That by *his Spirit*
 we may have a right Judgment in all Things,
 and evermore rejoice in his holy Comfort —
 ‘ That his *holy Spirit* may in all Things direct
 and rule our Hearts — ‘ That he will cleanse
 the Thoughts of our Hearts by the Inspiration of
 his *holy Spirit*.

In the Office for CONFIRMATION, we pray
 for the Persons to be confirmed, ‘ That God will
 strengthen them with the *Holy Ghost the Comforter*,
 and daily increase in them his *manifest Gifts of*
Grace, the *Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding*,
 the

the *Spirit* of Counsel and ghostly Strength, the *Spirit* of Knowledge and true Godliness; —
 ‘ That he will fill them with the *Spirit* of his holy Fear — and, ‘ That they may daily *increase* in his *holy Spirit* more and more.

To these I might add the numerous Instances throughout our Liturgy, of Prayer for *Grace* and *Strength*. For though the *Spirit* is not expressly mentioned, it is sufficiently understood, that the Church means by these Expressions, the *spiritual* Aids and Assistances, by which sincere Christians are enabled to avoid and resist Temptations, and to proceed successfully in their spiritual Course. But the foregoing Instances in which the *Spirit* is expressly mentioned, as they are here set before you in one View, will be sufficient to arm you against any suggestions, as if our Church were regardless of the Doctrine of *Regeneration* and *New-birth*, and of the Influences of the holy *Spirit* upon the Hearts of Christians; and as if there were Need for any Member of it, to seek elsewhere for a more *spiritual* Service.

But it is one Thing to pray *for* the *Spirit*, and another Thing to pray *by* the *Spirit*. We are satisfied in general, that the *Spirit* of God assists us in our Endeavours to do what is good, and particularly in a due Performance of Religious Offices; because the Scripture has in many Places assured us of it. But, that Prayer, whether of Minister or People, is the *single Work* of the *Spirit*, we dare not say, because the Scripture has no where told us that it is. And tho’ an *acquired Ability* to pray upon all Occasions, in publick or private, is not a Thing in its Nature impossible; yet is so rarely attained

attained to any Degree of Perfection, and oft-times accompanied with so much Impropriety and Confusion, that you have great Reason to be thankful to God for a publick Service prepared to your Hands, in which you find due Provision made for the spiritual and temporal Necessities of yourselves and your Fellow Christians ; besides the very great Advantage of knowing before-hand, what the Things are for which you are to join in Prayer.

In like Manner, we are firmly persuaded in general, that we live under the gracious Influences of the *holy Spirit*, and that he both excites and enables us to do good. But that this or that *Thought* or *Action* is an Effect of the sole Motion or immediate Impulse of the Spirit without any Co-operation of our own Mind ; or that the holy Spirit, and our natural Conceptions, do respectively contribute to this or that Thought or Action, in such a *Measure*, or to such a *Degree* ; these are Things we dare not say, both because our Saviour has told us, that we know no more of the *Workings* of the Spirit, than we know of the Wind, *from whence it cometh, and whither it goeth*, and because we clearly see, that all *Pretences* to that Knowledge, unless accompanied with the proper Evidences of a Divine Inspiration, would open a Door to endless Enthusiasm and Delusion.

God forbid, that in this profane and degenerate Age, every Thing that has an *Appearance* of Piety and Devotion, should not be considered in the most favourable Light that it is capable of. But at the same Time, it is surely very proper, that

Men

Men should be called upon for some reasonable Evidences of a *Divine* Commiffion.

I. When they tell us of *extraordinary* Commu-
nications they have with God, and more than or-
dinary Affurances of a special *Preſence* with
them.

1. This Day I intended to ſtay on board to write Letters, but God being pleaſed to ſhew me it was not his Will, I went on Shore again.
2. Had much of the *Preſence* of God with me.
3. Had *much of God* with me to Day.
4. I told the People that God *called* me, and I muſt away——Intended to preach at Fort Simons, &c. but Lord, thou *calleft* me elſewhere.
5. God having ſhown both me and my Friends, that it was his *Will* I ſhould return for a While to *England*——I preached my Farewel Sermon.
6. The Kingdom of God is *within* me.
7. My Oppoſers, would they ſpeak, cannot but confeſs that God is *with me* of a Truth.
8. See ye not, ye Oppoſers, how ye prevail nothing? Why do you not believe that it would not be thus, unleſs God was *with me*?

1 Mr. *Whitefield's* Journal I. p. 3. 2 Ibid. p. 18.
3 Ibid. p. 28. 4 Journal III. p. 9. 5 Ibid. p. 11.
6 Journal III. p. 4. 7 Ibid. p. 18. 8 Ibid.
p. 33.

- ¹ It is remarkable, that we have not had such a continued *Presence* of God among us, as we have had since I was threatened to be excommunicated.
- ² Observing, Providence *called* me this Morning, I went with some Christian Friends to *Bath*.
- ³ Our Master being *with us*, I preached with Power.

II. When they talk in the Language of those who have a special and immediate *Mission* from God.

- ⁴ Was soon convinced, that God has *sent me* *hither* of a Truth.
- ⁵ The Eternal Almighty I A M, hath *sent* me, and will, no doubt, protect me.
- ⁶ To preach the Gospel at *Frederica* also; for therefore am I *sent*.
- ⁷ Lord, thou *callest* me elsewhere.
- ⁸ This I know; what I have spoken *from* God, will come to pass, (lo, it will come) and then shall Scoffers and Despisers know that a *Minister of Christ* hath been amongst them.
- ⁹ Lord, open thou their Eyes, that they may see that this is thy *Doing*.
- ¹⁰ Now know I more and more, that the Lord *calls me* into the Fields; for no

¹ Journal III. p. 35. ² Ibid. p. 37. ³ Ibid. p. 58. ⁴ Journal I. p. 5. ⁵ Ibid. p. 32. ⁶ Journal II. p. 7. ⁷ Ibid. p. 9. ⁸ Ibid. p. 19. ⁹ Journal III. p. 33. ¹⁰ Ibid. p. 90.

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House or Street is able to contain Half the People that come to hear the Word.

¹ The weather continued mighty fair, while I was delivering my *Master's* Message.

² Nothing confirms me more in my Opinion, that God *intends to work a great Work upon the Earth*, than to find how his Children of all Denominations every where wrestle in Prayer for me.

III. When they profess to think and act under the immediate Guidance of a *Divine Inspiration*.

³ Made a farewell Exhortation, as God gave me *Utterance*.

⁴ God *assisted* me to talk clearly of the New-birth and Justification by Faith alone, with one that opposed it.

⁵ The Spirit of Supplication *increases in my heart* daily.

⁶ I spoke with the *Demonstration* of the Spirit.

⁷ Was *filled with the Holy Ghost*; which very much strengthened my Body, and made my Feet like Harts Feet.

⁸ Expounded with such *Demonstration of the Spirit*, as I never spoke with before.

⁹ God has given me a *Double Portion* of his Spirit indeed.

¹⁰ I fear I should *quench the Spirit*, did I

¹ Journal III. p. 95. ² Ibid. p. 107. ³ Journal I. p. 13. ⁴ Journal III. p. 8. ⁵ Ibid. p. 6.
⁶ Ibid. p. 13. ⁷ Ibid. ⁸ Ibid. p. 14. ⁹ Ibid. p. 15. ¹⁰ Ibid. p. 17.

not go on to speak as he gives me *Utterance*.

¹ God enabled me to speak with such *irresistible Power*, that the Opposers were quite struck dumb and confounded.

² Felt the *Spirit of God* working in me mightily.

³ Finding myself *strengthened from above*, I went and expounded.

⁴ Blessed be God, I find myself much *refreshed in Spirit*, and a new *Supply of Strength* given me. Thus shall it be done to the Man, whom God delighteth to honour.

⁵ Had *extraordinary Power* given me at the Society in *Nicholas-street*.

⁶ I believe few, if any, were able to resist the *Power*, wherewith God *enabled* me to speak.

⁷ My heart was *full of God*, and I spake as one having *Authority*.

IV. When they speak of their Preaching and Expounding, and the Effects of them, as the sole Work of a *Divine Power*.

⁸ I had a great Hoarseness upon me; but notwithstanding God enabled me to speak *with Power*.

⁹ God's *holy Spirit*, seemed to be moving on the Faces of some of the Souls in the Ships.

¹ Journal III. p. 24. ² Ibid. ³ Ibid. p. 40.
⁴ Ibid. p. 41. ⁵ Ibid. p. 53. ⁶ Ibid. p. 108. ⁷ Ibid.
⁸ Journal I. p. 12, ⁹ Ibid. p. 21.

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- 1 Was enabled to read Prayers and preach with Power.
- 2 God has been pleased to set his *Seal to my Ministry*, in a Manner I could not, I dared not to expect in *America*.
- 3 God will make his *Power* to be known in me.
- 4 Preached and expounded with *great Power and Enlargement* — with *great Power and Demonstration of the Spirit*.
- 5 Was told my Preaching was attended with *uncommon Power*.
- 6 God hath set *his Seal* to my Ministry.
- 7 I expounded at the *Savoy*. — There, I think, I have commonly had *more Power* given me, than at any other Place.
- 8 I think I never spoke with greater *Freedom and Power*.
Had *extraordinary Power* given me at the Society in *Nicholas-street*.
- 10 Preached with *uncommon Power*.
- 11 *Extraordinary Power* at *Poor-house* this Afternoon.
- 12 Preached with such *Power and Demonstration of the Spirit*, as I never saw before.
- 13 The Word came with *Power*.
- 14 The Word of God came with *such Power*,

1 Journal II. p. 6, 8, 12, 15, 34. — 2 Journal III.

p. 29, 32, 44, 45, 46, 47, 53, 76, 80, 88. 3 Ibid.

p. 8. 4 Ibid. p. 3. Ibid. 5 Ibid. p. 16. 6 Ibid.

p. 19. 7 Ibid. p. 42. 8 Ibid. p. 50. 9 Ibid.

p. 53. 10 Ibid. p. 54. 11 Ibid. p. 55. 12 Ibid.

p. 87. 13 Ibid. p. 90. 14 Ibid. p. 92.

M

that

that all, I believe, were pleasingly surprized.

² I believe few, if any, were able to resist the *Power* wherewith God *enabled* me to speak.

³ At *Kennington Common* we had *extraordinary Presence* of God among us.

⁴ People were so melted down on every Side, that the greatest Scoffer must have owned, that this was the *Finger of God*.

V. When they boast of sudden and surprizing Effects as wrought by the *Holy Ghost*, in Consequence of their Preaching.

¹ The young Man's Convictions were strong, and as far as I could find, a *thorow Renovation* begun in his heart.

² The *Holy Ghost* powerfully worked upon my Hearers.

³ I expound near *St. James's square*; where one young woman was lately *filled with the Holy Ghost*.

⁴ Five Days a Woman travail'd and groan'd, being in Bondage.—On *Thursday* Evening our Lord *got himself the Victory*; and from that Moment she has been full of Love and Joy. It is to be observed, her Friends have accounted her mad these three Years, and accordingly have bled, blister'd her, and what not.

¹ Journal III. p. 102.

² Ibid. p. 109.

³ Ibid.

p. 110.

⁴ Journal I. p. 23.

⁵ Journal III. p. 6.

⁶ Ibid. p. 42.

⁷ Ibid. p. 43.

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- 1 We have reason to think, that four, within this Fortnight, have been *born of God*.
- 2 Heard of one that had received the *Holy Ghost*, immediately upon my preaching Christ.

VI. When they claim the Spirit of *Prophecy*.

- 3 This I know, what I have spoken from God, *will* come to pass.
- 4 There certainly *will* be a *fulfilling* of those Things which God *by his Spirit* hath spoken unto my Soul.
- 5 God *will* make his Power to be known in me.
- 6 And yet I *shall* see greater Things than these.
- 7 There are many Promises to be *fulfilled* in me, many Souls *to be* called, many Sufferings *to be* endured, before I go hence.
- 8 We dined with several Christian Friends with the kind Keeper of the Prison, and rejoiced exceedingly at the Thoughts, that we should, one Day or other, sing together in such a Place as *Paul* and *Silas* did. God prepare us for that Hour, for I *believe* it *will* come.
- 9 Yet a little while, and a suffering Time *will* come. I cannot follow him now, but I *shall* follow him afterwards.

1 Journal III. p. 43. 2 Ibid. p. 72. 3 Journal III. p. 19.
4 Ibid. p. 35. 5 Journal III. p. 3.
6 Ibid. p. 16. 7 Ibid. p. 24. 8 Ibid. p. 35.
9 Ibid. p. 90.

¹ Knowing not, what will befall me ; saving that the *Holy Ghost* witnesseth in every Place, that Labours, Afflictions and Trials of all Kinds abide me.

VII. When they speak of themselves, in the Language, and under the Character, of *Apostles* of Christ, and even of *Christ* himself.

² To preach the Gospel at *Frederica* also ; for therefore am I sent.

³ It came to pass, that when Jesus was returned, the People gladly received him.— These last Words were remarkably pressed upon me at *Savannah*, when I was consulting God by Prayer, whether it was his Will that I should go to *England*.

⁴ Howbeit, we must be cast upon a certain Island. Behold, the Words are now fulfilled !

⁵ When I am *weak*, then am I *strong*.

⁶ We speak what we do *know*, etc.—

⁷ I must go into every Place and City where I have been already ; for therefore am I sent.

⁸ The time will come, when they shall thrust you out of their Synagogues.

⁹ Had another come in his own Name, him they would have received.

¹⁰ I really believe no less than 20,000 were

¹ Journal III. p. 113. ² Journal III. p. 7. ³ Ibid. p. 18.

⁴ Ibid. p. 28. ⁵ Journal III. p. 3.

⁶ Ibid. p. 15. ⁷ Ibid. p. 20. ⁸ Ibid. p. 20.

⁹ Ibid. p. 29. Ibid. p. 55.

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present. Blessed are the Eyes which see the Things which we see.

1 Mr. *Wesley* is left behind at *Bristol*, to preach the Way of God more perfectly.

2 The Holy Ghost witnesseth in every Place, that Labours, &c. abide me.

VIII. When they profess to plant and propagate a *new Gospel*, as unknown to the Generality of Ministers and People, in a Christian Country.

3 At *Cardiff*—I offer'd *Jesus Christ* freely even to them who mock'd, and should have rejoiced if they would have accepted of him.

4 I could have heartily wish'd all such Scoffers had been present, that I might have offer'd them *Salvation* through *Jesus Christ*.

5 I think, *Wales* is excellently well prepared for the *Gospel* of Christ.

6 There is a most comfortable Prospect of spreading the *Gospel* in *Wales*.

7 Received News of the wonderful Progress of the *Gospel* in *Yorkshire*, under the Ministry of my dear Brother *Ingham*.

8 Upon his Departure—The good Lord send somebody amongst them, to water what his own right Hand hath planted.

1 Journal III. p. 65. 2 Ibid. p. 113. 3 Journal III. p. 47. 4 Ibid. p. 50. 5 Ibid. p. 51.

6 Ibid. 7 Ibid. p. 52. 8 Ibid. p. 60.

- 1 Well may the Devil and his Angels rage horribly; their Kingdom is in Danger.
- 2 Blessed be God, there is one coming after me, [Mr. John Wesley] who, I hope, will cherish the Spark of Divine Love new kindled in their Hearts.
- 3 I was refresh'd by a great Packet of Letters, giving me an Account of the Success of the Gospel in different Parts.
- 4 A most comfortable Packet of Letters, giving me an Account of the Success of the Gospel.

If you ask, with what View, or for what End, I have taken the Pains to extract the foregoing Passages, and to range them thus under the proper Heads; It is, that you may be able to make a Judgment for yourselves, whether Persons who assume such a Character, and speak in such a Language, ought not to give Proof of an *extraordinary Commission* from God; and if they do not, whether the Part they act, and the Language they use, can be called by any other Name than that of *Enthusiasm*?

If it be alledged in their Favour, That they are good Men, and mean well; let the Answer be, That good and well-meaning Men do oft-times deceive both themselves and others; and in no Case so often, as in that of religious Zeal and Transport. And so far is a *good Intention* from taking off the Charge of Enthusiasm, that it is a necessary ingredient in it; the proper Difference

1 Journal III. p. 61.
p. 73.

4 Ibid. p. 78.

2 Ibid, p. 64.

3 Ibid.

between an Enthusiast and an Imposter being this, that the first is deceived himself, and as long as he enjoys his own Thoughts, and modestly keeps within the Rules of Peace and Order, is to be *pitied*; but the second *intends* to deceive others, and is therefore, in every Shape, to be *abhorred* and *detested*.

But there is one Thing in their Conduct, which it is hard to reconcile to *fair* and *ingenuous* Dealing; and that is, their endeavouring to justify their own *extraordinary* Methods of teaching, by casting unworthy Reflections upon the Parochial Clergy, as deficient in the Discharge of their Duty, and not instructing their People in the true Doctrines of Christianity.

- 1 It is most notorious, that for the *moralizing* Iniquity of the Priests, the Land mourns. We have preached and lived many sincere Persons out of our Communion. I have now conversed with several of the best of all Denominations: Many of them solemnly protest, that they went from the Church because they could not find Food for their Souls; they stayed among us, till they were starved out. I know, this Declaration will expose me to the Ill-will, not of all my Brethren, but of all my *indolent*, *earthly-minded*, *pleasure-taking* Brethren. But was I not to speak, the very Stones would cry out against them. Speak therefore I must, and will, and will not spare. God look to the Event. Whatever becomes of the Pastors who feed themselves,

and not the Flock, I have born my Testimony, I have delivered my own Soul.

Speaking of the Clergy who expose their Methods :

¹ "What their real Reason is, whether Envy, or, *Master in so doing thou reproachest us*, or ought else, shall one Day be manifested to Men and Angels."

² I perceive, People would be every where willing to hear, if the Ministers were ready to teach the Truth, as it is in Jesus.

This is a heavy Charge ; and as it falls little short of that of our Saviour against the Scribes and Pharisees, so is it delivered with little less Authority. But I hope it is very far from the Truth ; and if it be meant (as it seems to be) of the Generality of the Clergy of the Church of *England*, as preaching Morality, and not Christianity, it is impossible for the Person who lays the Charge, to know whether it is true or not. And therefore it ought, at least, to have been laid with greater Degrees of *Caution* and *Restriction* ; and, as it is not, one hardly knows what Name to give it. To call it a *rash* Censure, is by far too gentle.

The Success of Ministers in the Discharge of their Duty, depends greatly upon the Esteem and good Opinion of their People ; and they who go about to represent the Parochial Clergy as unable or unwilling to teach their People aright, are so far answerable for defeating the good Effects that their Ministry might otherwise have. Unless they be weak enough to think, that *Itinerant Preaching*

¹ Journal III. p. 74.

² Ibid. p. 109.

to confused Multitudes, is a more effectual Way to preserve Religion among us, than Parochial Establishments and a settled Ministry. At the same Time that People profess a greater Zeal for Religion than their Neighbours, they should take Care not to indulge themselves in such Liberties, as evidently tend to weaken and undermine that, which, under God, is the *national Support* of it.

I hope, the People of this Diocese have no Cause to complain that they are not duly instructed in the Doctrines of Christianity by their own proper Ministers. Among the printed *Directions* which I gave at my first coming to the See, and which have been put into the Hands of every Incumbent since, this, upon the Head of *Preaching*, is one.

“ It must be always remembered, in the first
 “ Place, that we are *Christian* Preachers, and not
 “ barely Preachers of *Morality*. For though it is
 “ true, that one End of Christ’s coming, was to
 “ correct the false Glosses and Interpretations of
 “ the *moral* Law, and, in Consequence thereof,
 “ one End of his instituting a Ministry must be,
 “ to prevent the Return of those Abuses, by
 “ keeping up in the Minds of Men a true Notion
 “ of natural Religion, and a just Sense of their
 “ Obligations to the Performance of *moral* Du-
 “ ties; yet it is also true, that the *main* End of
 “ his coming, was to establish a new Covenant

Now know I more and more, that the Lord calls me into the FIELDS; for no House or Street is able to contain Half the People that come to hear the Word.
Whitfield’s Journ. III- p. 90.

“ with Mankind, founded upon new Terms and
 “ new Promises; to shew us a new Way of ob-
 “ taining *Forgiveness of Sins*, and *Reconciliation*
 “ to God, and *eternal Happiness*; and to prescribe
 “ Rules of greater Purity and Holiness, by Way
 “ of Preparation for greater Degrees of Happiness
 “ and Glory. These (that is, the several Branches
 “ of what we may call the *Mediatorial Scheme*,
 “ with the several Duties annexed to and resulting
 “ from each Branch) are, without Doubt, the
 “ main Ingredients of the Gospel State; those,
 “ by which Christianity stands distinguished from
 “ all other Religions, and Christians are raised to
 “ far higher Hopes and far greater Degrees of
 “ Purity and Perfection. In which Views, it
 “ would seem strange, if a Christian Preacher
 “ were to dwell only upon such Duties as are
 “ common to *Jews*, *Heathens*, and Christians;
 “ and were not more especially obliged to dwell
 “ on and inculcate those Principles and Doctrines,
 “ which are the distinguishing Excellencies of the
 “ Christian Religion, and by the Knowledge and
 “ Practice of which, more especially every Chri-
 “ stian is intitled to the Blessings and Privileges of
 “ the Gospel Covenant.—

“ The Thing therefore which I would recom-
 “ mend to young Preachers, is, to avoid both
 “ the Extremes, by ordering the Choice of their
 “ Subjects in such a Manner, that each of those
 “ Heads may have its proper Share, and their
 “ Hearers be duly instructed upon both. Only
 “ with these Cautions in relation to moral Sub-
 “ jects, That, upon all such Occasions, Justice be
 “ done at the same Time to *Christianity*, by ta-
 “ king special Notice of the Improvements which
 “ it

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" it has made in every Branch of the moral
 " Scheme, and warning their Hearers not to rest
 " in the Righteousness of a *moral Heathen*, but to
 " aspire to Christian Perfection; and, in the
 " next Place, that all moral Discourses be enrich-
 " ed by Examples and Illustrations from Scrip-
 " ture; which besides its being more familiar to
 " the People than other Writings, has in it such
 " a noble Plainness and Simplicity, as far surpasses
 " all the Beauties and elegancies that are so
 " much admired in Heathen Authors. To which
 " give me Leave to add a third Observation, with
 " regard to the Doctrine and Duties peculiarly be-
 " longing to the *Christian* Scheme or the new
 " Covenant, That the true Way to secure to
 " these their proper Share, is the setting apart
 " some certain Seasons of the Year for *Cateche-*
 " *tical Discourses*, whether in the Way of ex-
 " pounding or preaching; which being carried
 " on regularly, tho' at different Times, according
 " to the Order and Method of the *Church Cate-*
 " *chism*, will lead the Minister, as by a Thread,
 " to the great and fundamental Doctrines of the
 " Christian Faith; and not only to explain them
 " to the People, but to lay out the particular
 " Duties which more immediately flow from each
 " Head, together with the Encouragements to
 " the Performance of them: That so, *Principle*
 " and *Practice* may go Hand in Hand, as they
 " do throughout the whole Christian Scheme;
 " and as they certainly ought to do, throughout
 " the Preaching of every Christian Minister."

This was my Judgment then, and is so still;
 and I see no reason to alter it, if it be granted,
 as it necessarily must, that Morality is an *essential*

“ with Mankind, founded upon new Terms and
 “ new Promises; to shew us a new Way of ob-
 “ taining *Forgiveness of Sins*, and *Reconciliation*
 “ to God, and *eternal Happiness*; and to prescribe
 “ Rules of greater Purity and Holiness, by Way
 “ of Preparation for greater Degrees of Happiness
 “ and Glory. These (that is, the several Branches
 “ of what we may call the *Mediatorial Scheme*,
 “ with the several Duties annexed to and resulting
 “ from each Branch) are, without Doubt, the
 “ main Ingredients of the Gospel State; those,
 “ by which Christianity stands distinguished from
 “ all other Religions, and Christians are raised to
 “ far higher Hopes and far greater Degrees of
 “ Purity and Perfection. In which Views, it
 “ would seem strange, if a Christian Preacher
 “ were to dwell only upon such Duties as are
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 “ on and inculcate those Principles and Doctrines,
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 “ Christian Religion, and by the Knowledge and
 “ Practice of which, more especially every Chri-
 “ stian is intitled to the Blessings and Privileges of
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 “ with these Cautions in relation to moral Sub-
 “ jects, That, upon all such Occasions, Justice be
 “ done at the same Time to *Christianity*, by ta-
 “ king special Notice of the Improvements which

“ it.

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" it has made in every Branch of the moral
 " Scheme, and warning their Hearers not to rest
 " in the Righteousness of a *moral Heathen*, but to
 " aspire to Christian Perfection; and, in the
 " next Place, that all moral Discourses be enrich-
 " ed by Examples and Illustrations from Scrip-
 " ture; which besides its being more familiar to
 " the People than other Writings, has in it such
 " a noble Plainness and Simplicity, as far surpasses
 " all the Beauties and elegancies that are so
 " much admired in Heathen Authors. To which
 " give me Leave to add a third Observation, with
 " regard to the Doctrine and Duties peculiarly be-
 " longing to the *Christian* Scheme or the new
 " Covenant, That the true Way to secure to
 " these their proper Share, is the setting apart
 " some certain Seasons of the Year for *Cateche-*
 " *tical Discourses*, whether in the Way of ex-
 " pounding or preaching; which being carried
 " on regularly, tho' at different Times, according
 " to the Order and Method of the *Church Cate-*
 " *chism*, will lead the Minister, as by a Thread,
 " to the great and fundamental Doctrines of the
 " Christian Faith; and not only to explain them
 " to the People, but to lay out the particular
 " Duties which more immediately flow from each
 " Head, together with the Encouragements to
 " the Performance of them: That so, *Principle*
 " and *Practice* may go Hand in Hand, as they
 " do throughout the whole Christian Scheme;
 " and as they certainly ought to do, throughout
 " the Preaching of every Christian Minister."

This was my Judgment then, and is so still;
 and I see no reason to alter it, if it be granted,
 as it necessarily must, that Morality is an *essential*

Part of the Christian Religion, and that the ¹ *Mediatorial Scheme* comprehends all the distinguishing Doctrines of Christianity, as such ; of which, surely, the Holy Spirit, with the Influences thereof, is one.

But I hope, when your Ministers preach to you the Doctrine of *Regeneration*, or *being born again of the Spirit*, as laid down in the New-Testament ; they do not tell you that it *must* be *instantaneous*, and *inwardly felt* at the very Time ; both, because there is no such Thing revealed to us by Christ or his Apostles, who lay down the Doctrine in *general Terms* ; and because Experience shews us, that the Renovation of the Heart and Life is effected *by Degrees*, and discovers itself, *more and more*, in a Hatred of Sin, and in a gradual Progress and Improvement in those Graces, which the Scripture declares to be the *Fruits of the Spirit*.

I hope, when they dissuade *bad Men* from a Security in Sinning, and a groundless *Presumption* upon the Mercy of God, they also endeavour to preserve *good Men* from *Despair* ; by teaching them to make a Judgment of their spiritual Condition, (or, in other Words,) whether they be in a State of Salvation, or not) from the present Dis-

¹ This includes the whole Work of our *Redemption by Christ* ; the several Branches of which, as laid down in the *New Testament*, have been set before the People of my Diocese at one View, in my Second *Pastoral Letter* ; particularly, the two Doctrines of our *Justification* by Faith in Christ, and of our *Sanctification* by the Holy Spirit.

position

position of their Hearts, and the Tenour of their Lives, and the *Improvements* they make in Grace and Goodness; and not from any sudden and extraordinary *Influences* and *Impulses*.

I hope, that when your Ministers preach to you of *Justification by Faith alone*, which is asserted in the strongest Manner ¹ by our Church; they explain it in such a Manner, as to leave no Doubt upon your Minds, whether good Works are a *necessary Condition* of your being justified in the Sight of God ².

I hope, that in expounding to you any Text or Portion of Scripture, they do it in the known Methods of comparing Scripture with Scripture, and by just and regular reasonings upon it, and, where Need is, by having Recourse to the Expositions of Writers of known Learning and Judgment. But if, laying aside these Helps, they pretend to derive their Knowledge from *immediate Inspiration*, they deceive both themselves and you. The setting up for a publick Expounder of Scripture, without a competent Share of acquired Knowledge and Ability for the Work, is a very great *Presumption*; to say no worse. And therefore it was a wise Rule among the *Religious Societies* at their first Institution, 'To use such *Expositors* in reading the Scripture at their Evening

¹ ART. XI. We are accounted righteous before God, only for the Merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by *Faith*, and not for our own Works or Deservings.

² ART. XII. — By good Works, a lively Faith may be as evidently known, as a Tree discerned by the Fruit.

Meetings,

Meetings, as were recommended to them by their *Ministers.*¹

I hope, lastly, that in their Preaching they frequently inculcate upon you the indispensable Obligation you are under, to lead sober and regular Lives, and to be diligent in the business of your several Stations, out of a Sense of Duty to God, whose Providence has placed you in them; and to take Care, that all who are in any Respect put under your Government, be instructed in their Duty, and kept to the Practice of it, particularly in a regular and religious Observation of the Lord's Day. The Duties which we owe to God, our Neighbour, and ourselves, and the several *Motives* and *Obligations* to the Performance of them, afford a large Field for Discourses from the Pulpit; and if a serious Discourse upon any of those Heads, fail of its due Effect, and leave not some good Impressions upon the Mind, it is the Fault of the Hearer, and not of the Preacher; and to such Hearers it is very little material what the Subject is.

This then, together with a frequent Explanation of the Doctrines peculiar to Christianity, as enforced above, is true Christian Preaching; such as

¹ As all *Controversial* Points are forbidden by their Orders to be meddled with in their Conferences (because they only design to promote *practical* Holiness, by their assembling together;) so in reading of those *practical* Portions of Holy Scripture, to which their Orders direct them, they have Recourse to Dr. *Hammond's* Exposition, or some other Author recommended by their *Ministers*. *Woodward's Account of the Religious Societies*, Chap. 7.

will

will always deserve your serious attention, and at the same Time, engage your sincere Esteem and Respect for your Minister. And if you desire to be more fully instructed upon any particular Head of Doctrine or Duty, which, you think, has not been so treated of in publick, as to come up to your Case; you may have Recourse to your Minister for further instructions in *private*. And for a further Help, there are not wanting good Books upon most Subjects, which may be usefully read at home, either by yourself, or, which is better, with your Family. And it is also to be remembered, that the Instructions you receive at Church, is not from the *Pulpit* only. You have the Holy Scriptures read to you; and the Prayers themselves, from Beginning to End, are so many Lessons of Duty; as they put you in Mind to labour after all those spiritual Blessings and Attainments which you pray for.

The great Preservative of Religion, and of Order and Regularity in the Exercise of it, is, the Provision that is made for the Performance of publick Offices by Persons lawfully appointed within particual Bounds and Districts; and if these be broken down, nothing can follow but Disorder and Confusion. This Nation, in the Time of our Forefathers, had sufficient Experience of the Mischief and Contempt that may be brought upon Religion, by *inspired* Tongues and *itching* Ears; ‘When the Holy Spirit was alledged, to *sanctify* the greatest Extravagancies and the most ridiculous Fancies; ‘When the most ordinary Actions and Incidents of Life, were ascribed to the Influencies of the same Spirit; ‘When the Doctrine of Justification by Faith alone was carried into

into an utter Exclusion of the Necessity of good Works, and, under that Notion, grew to be the distinguishing Mark of a whole ¹ Sect; and, When the Bounds of Order and Discipline were broken down, and the settled Ministries and Offices of the Church depreciated and brought into Contempt, as Dispensations of a low and less spiritual Nature.

The aiming at high Flights in Religion, and depreciating the *ordinary* Methods of maintaining and propagating it, looks speciously, and will never want Admirers and Followers.. But surely, an Endeavour to raise Religion to greater Heights and greater Abstractions from common Life, than Christ and his Apostles made and designed it, is attended with mischievous Consequences; from what Principle soever it proceeds, or with what Degrees of Zeal soever it may be accompanied. Some it draws from their proper Business which God has required them to attend, and heats them by Degrees into a Kind of Religious Frenzy, and seldom fails to lead them into *spiritual Pride* and an inward Contempt of the Generality of their Fellow Christians, as of a *low* Size in Religion, compared with themselves. And others are naturally led by it, to think it *impossible* for them to attain those *Heights* in which Religion is made to consist, and to give over all Thoughts of being religious at all. With this latter View it was, that a zealous Advocate for Infidelity, some Years since, made it his Business to represent Christianity, and the Duties of it, as of such an *exalted* Nature, as might discourage the Generality of

1 Antinomians.

People

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People from aiming at it, or thinking of it, in order to persuade them to take the same free and unrestrained Enjoyment of this World, that he himself was known to do. Whereas, nothing is more certain, than that the Christian Religion is calculated for *common* Life, for Low as well as High, for Poor as well as Rich; and that (as I observed before) one great Part of the *Exercise* of Religion, is an honest and diligent Discharge of the Business of our several Stations; out of a Sense of Duty to God, who has placed us in them, and in the Hope of a future State of Happiness which he has promised as the Reward of our dutiful Compliance with his Appointment. If it were otherwise, Christ would have introduced into the World a new Religion no ways suited to the *general* Situation and Circumstances of Mankind, and have required such a Course of Duty, as the greatest Part of them are in no *Condition* to discharge.

There is a remarkable Passage in a late Journal, which seems to carry in it a great deal of that Kind of *Discouragement*, which I have been speaking of. It is Word for Word as follows:

“ I write this, to shew how far a Man may
 “ go, and yet know nothing of Jesus Christ. Be-
 “ hold here was one ² who constantly attended on
 “ the Means of Grace, exact in his Morals, hu-
 “ mane and courteous in his Conversation, who
 “ gave much in Alms, was frequent in private
 “ Duties; and yet, till about six Weeks ago, as
 “ destitute of any saving experimental Knowledge

¹ Journal III. p. 81, 82.

² Mr. Seward.

“ of

“ of Jesus Christ, as those on whom his Name
 “ was never called, and who still sit in Darkneſs
 “ and the Shadow of Death.”

How it could be, that a professed Christian, who constantly attended the *Means of Grace*, and was frequent in private Duties, did, all that while, know nothing of Jesus Christ, is beyond my Comprehension. And I am as much at a Loss to understand, what was that *ſaving experimental Knowledge* of Jesus Christ, for want of which he could only be reckned among *Heathens* and *Infidels*. We ought also to have been acquainted with the Circumstances of the *ſudden Illumination*, by which that Knowledge is ſuppoſed to have been conveyed; to enable us to judge to what *Cauſe* or *Influence* it ought to be aſcribed. There is no Doubt, but God, when he pleaſes, can work upon the Minds of Men by extraordinary Influences; but ſo long as there is no *Teſtimony* of their being the immediate Work of God, but the Whole reſts, in this and other like Caſes, upon the Imagination and Perſuaſion of the Perſon or Perſons concerned: Others, who cannot ſee the Heart, nor the inward Operations upon it, muſt be excuſed, if they conſider it as *Enthuſiaſm* and *Deluſion*, till they ſee reaſonable Grounds for conſidering it in any other Light.

This Caſe may ſeem to bear ſome Reſemblance to the Conversion of *Cornelius*, as recorded in the 1 Acts of the Apoſtles, but differs from it in three important Points; the firſt, that we are very certain, becauſe the Scripture has expreſſy told us, that the whole Affair of conveying the Knowledge

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of Jesus Christ to *Cornelius*, was ordered and carried on under the *immediate Direction* and Guidance of God; the second, that the Person whose Ministry God was pleased to make use of, was *St. Peter*, an Apostle of Christ, and whose Divine Mission and Inspiration were both unquestionable; and the third, that the Conveyance of the Holy Ghost was testified by an outward and sensible Evidence, namely, the *Gift of Tongues*.

These are Things which I thought proper to be laid before you *at this Time*, as well in Discharge of my own Duty, as out of a hearty Concern for your *Safety* in the great Affair of your Souls. And as I doubt not but you will consider them with all the Attention and Impartiality which Matters of that great Importance deserve, so I shall not fail to make it my earnest Prayer to God, that he will be graciously pleased to preserve you from all Error, and particularly, from the two dangerous Extremes of *Lukewarmness* on one Hand, and *Enthusiasm* on the other. To his Blessing and Direction I commend you, and remain

Fulham,
Aug. 1, 1739

Your Faithful Friend,
and Pastor,

Edm'. London.



The Bishop of *London's*
Fifth and Last Pastoral Letter, &c.
occasioned

By our present Dangers; and exciting to a
serious *Reformation* of Life and Manners.

With a

POSTSCRIPT; setting forth the
Danger and Mischiefs of *POPERY*.



THE Occasion of my applying to you at this Time, and in this Way, is, to set before you some Duties which God more particularly calls for, and requires of us, in Times of publick Danger and Calamity. And, that what I have to offer to you may have the greater Weight, I will enforce it by *Warnings* and *Examples* in the like Case, as
we

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we find them recorded in the Holy Scriptures; which, in the Words of St. *Paul*, were written for our Learning; that is, to acquaint us, first, with God's *ordinary* Methods of Dealing with Men and Nations, whether in the Way of Judgment, or in the Way of Mercy; and then, to shew us the surest Means of avoiding the one, and securing the other.

For this End, Reason teaches, and God commands, that, in the first Place, the best *human Means* be made use of for Safety and Deliverance in the Day of Danger, and that we be earnest in Prayer for a *Blessing* upon those Means, and for the Success of them. To use Means without Prayer for the Divine Blessing, is an impious Reliance upon our own Wisdom and Strength; and to pray *without* the Use of human Means, is a *groundless* and *presumptuous* Expectation of Assistance from God.

In this our Day of Danger, the best Precautions have been used against the Attempts of the Enemy; and those Precautions have been accompanied with the fervent prayers of pious and good Christians, for a Blessing upon them. But, as this is a *National* Danger, there must be one Step further, to give us a Title to the Aid and Protection of God; I mean, a National Humiliation for Sins, and a Reformation of Lives and Manners; of the Efficacy of which for Deliverance from Danger, and of the Want of them as the Forerunner of Ruin and Destruction, we have, as I said, many remarkable Instances and Examples in Holy Scripture. But, setting aside

Rom. iv.

the

the Authority of Revelation, nothing can be more absurd in *Reason*, than for a Nation to expect *Aid and Protection* from God, while it continues in a Course of open and unrestrained Provocations against him; which, though the Provocations of *particular* Persons, may justly be accounted *National* in his Sight, if they are open and flagrant, and yet unrestrained by publick Authority.

This, it is true, belongs more immediately to the Civil Magistrate; but there may be many and great Irregularities both in particular Persons, and private Families, which are not within the Compass of *his* Knowledge, nor within the Reach of *his* Authority; however *heinous* and *provoking* they may be in the Sight of God. And therefore it is in vain to hope for a *National* Reformation, unless private Persons, who are under no Direction but their own, can be persuaded to lay this Matter to Heart, and to take diligent Heed to their own Ways; and unless Parents and Masters will make a Conscience of doing *their* Part toward it, by exerting the Authority which God has given them over their Children and Servants; Remembring, that they are not only answerable to *God* for the Sins and Irregularities which are committed or connived at, within their own Walls, but are also answerable to their *Country* for the Share they take, in bringing down the Judgments of God upon it. Nations are made up, first of *Individuals*, next of *Families*, and lastly of *Bodies* and *Communities*; and when there is a hearty Concurrence of all these in the great Work of Reformation, then, and not till then, it is truly *National*; and is the only effectual Means

Means of averting the Judgments of God, and securing his Protection in the Time of Danger, and engaging his Aid and Assistance for the Safety and Preservation of the *Whole*.

I. Toward this great End, let every INDIVIDUAL resolve to do his Part, and to answer for *one*; by keeping himself clear from the Vices of the Age, and by a religious Attendance upon the holy Ordinances, publick and private, which God has appointed as a necessary Guard to his Innocence, against the manifold Temptations to the Violation of it, which are so frequently met with. And this, I desire to press with the greater Earnestness, because, on one hand, no Person, who seriously attends those holy Ordinances, can be either ignorant or unmindful of his Duty to God, and Man, and himself; and, on the other hand, he who lives in the Neglect of them, whatever *Knowledge* he may have of his Duty, will quickly lose both the *Sense* and *Remembrance* of it. And, in Truth, it is chiefly owing to the habitual Neglect of those Ordinances by some, and a careless and formal Attendance on them by others, that we may see among us so much Luke-warmness in Religion; which does not stop there, but grows apace into an habitual Disregard of it, and an Unconcernedness about it. And besides the Good and Evil of attending or neglecting the Ordinances of Religion, in their *Effects*; it ought to be further remembered, that a constant and serious Attendance upon them, where there is no reasonable Impediment, is enjoined in the Gospel as a Matter of *strict Duty*; and that the joyning in them with our Christian Brethren, has been considered

considered by the Church of Christ in all Ages, as a *necessary* Part of the Christian Dispensation.

II. The next Advance towards a National Reformation, must be in FAMILIES ; where Parents and Masters, in their own *Persons*, are *equally* concerned with all other *Individuals*, in what is said under the last Head. But their Concern extends much further ; first, as they have received *Power* from God to direct and govern all those who are under their Care and Inspection ; and then, as by the due exercise of that Power, they, above all others, may contribute to the Suppression of Vice, and Increase of Religion, and, by Consequence, to a national Reformation ; and, lastly, as this Power is a Talent put into their Hands by God, for the Neglect or Abuse of which they stand accountable to *him* from whom they received it. Those who are under their *Care*, are also under their *Eye* ; so that they cannot be ignorant of their Behaviour, without a shameful Degree of Thoughtlessness, or rather Stupidity, and an utter Unconcernedness for Religion. And as, without such habitual Thoughtlessness and Inattention, they cannot be ignorant of the Behaviour of their Children and Servants, so neither can they be ignorant of their own Duty in the Government of them, if they will in any Measure think of it, and attend to it.

The Duty of Parents with regard to their Children, and the Duty of Masters with regard to their Servants, however differing in other Respects, are, as to our present Consideration, much the same ; that is, To restrain them from Vice of all Kinds, and to watch the first Beginnings
of

of it, and Tendencies to it ; To admonish and reprove, and to punish if it is found necessary ; To instruct them in their Duty, and lead them to the Performance of it by a good Example, which is the most forcible Kind of Instruction ; and, To oblige them to a due Attendance on the Worship of God, both publick and private, and to a regular Observation of the *Lord's Day*.

Here is no Difficulty in all this, if Parents and Masters have a Heart to the Work, and are regular in their own Lives, and will consider withal, ' How great Service they may be daily doing to God and their Country ; ' How greatly they will be rewarded in the next Life for a conscientious Discharge of this important Duty ; and, How severely punished for the Neglect of it. Nor is either the Reward or Punishment to be wondered at, when it is considered, that the one is daily laying a *Foundation* of Virtue and Piety, and the other a *Foundation* of Vice and Profaneness, not only for his own Time, but for the next and following Generation.

I am willing to hope, that these Duties, and the Considerations proper to enforce them, will be seriously attended to and laid to Heart by Parents and Masters, for their own Sake, and for the Sake of God and his Religion ; and, at this Time particularly, out of a just Concern for the present and future Safety and Happiness of these Kingdoms ; being well assured, that without a National Reformation, we can neither be happy, nor safe ; and that nothing can so effectually contribute to both, as a due Regulation of *Families*, under the Conduct and Direction of their Heads and Governors ; as described above.

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III. From

III. From the Case of FAMILIES, as having it in their Power to contribute greatly to a National Reformation; we will proceed, with the same View, to BODIES and COMMUNITIES. And here it is, that the Business of the MAGISTRATE begins. By *Magistrates*, I mean all those who are vested with Civil Authority; those, for whom we pray in our publick Liturgy, *That they may truly and indifferently minister Justice, to the Punishment of Wickedness and Vice, and to the Maintenance of God's true Religion and Virtue.*

It is the proper Province of the Ministers of the Gospel, to labour against Vice and Wickedness, by Reason and Argument, by Doctrine and Example, by publick Exhortation and private Admonition. But if Men will harden themselves against all these, and, having cast off a Sense of Shame as well as a Sense of Duty, will let themselves loose into a Course of Impiety and Wickedness, and an open Indulgence in any notorious Sin, they then become fit Objects of the Minister of *Justice*; whose proper Business it is, as laid out by the Apostle, to be a *Terror to evil Works, and not to bear the Sword in vain*; considering himself as the *Minister of God, a Revenger to execute Wrath upon him that doth Evil.* And, in order to this, he is obliged, within his proper Sphere, to *watch* against the Growth of *open* Wickedness of every Kind, and by all proper Means to discourage it, and, if Need be, to restrain and punish it by a vigorous Execution of those wholesome Laws, which the Legislature has

¹ Rom. xiii. 3, 4.

provided against it. And all this, from a Sense of the Duty which he owes to the Publick; and in Obedience to God, whose *Providence* has entrusted him with Power, and to whose *Justice* he must be accountable for the Use and Exercise of it; especially, in Cases which concern God's Honour, and the maintaining his Religion in the World, against Vice and Profaneness. And the greater the *Regularity* is, which Magistrates, as well as Ministers, do themselves preserve and maintain in *private* Life, the greater Weight their Admonitions and Authority must have, and the greater their Strength will be, for the Suppressing of Vice, and promoting the same Regularity in their respective Stations.

IV. For these great Ends, the Legislature have done their Part, from Time to Time, by enacting Laws against Drunkenness, Swearing and Cursing, open Lewdnesses and Debaucheries, Blasphemy and Profaneness, and the Profanation of the Lord's Day. But what shall we say to the Execution? when, to our Shame be it spoken, the Violation of the Laws, and the Neglect of punishing it, are, in many Places, equally *notorious*. And this *Notoriety* in both, namely, open Wickedness, *unrestrained* and *unpunished*, is that which may be properly called a *National* Guilt. As long as the Corruptions of Nature are working within, and are favoured with a Variety of Temptations without, there will be much Sin and Wickedness in the World, which the best Means and Endeavours of Parents and Masters, Ministers and Magistrates, cannot prevent; and so far particular Persons must be answerable to God for their own Sins.

But if a Nation does not use the proper *Means* and *Endeavours* to restrain it, but, on the contrary, seems unconcerned about it, and suffers the Laws for opposing and suppressing it, to be laid asleep; by such a general Supineness and Neglect, the Guilt becomes *National*, and exposes the *Whole* to the Wrath and Judgments of God.

And if such should be found to be the Case of our own Nation, as I doubt it has been too much so for Years past, it behoves us to enquire sometimes, what are the most effectual Means of removing the Guilt and averting the Judgments of God; especially, in a Time of publick Danger, and when we see the Judgments coming towards us, and hanging over our Heads.

V. In this Enquiry, we can have no surer Guide, than the various Instances of God's dealing with Kingdoms and Nations, in the Way of *Judgment*, and in the Way of *Mercy*; as we find them set down in the Holy Scriptures, The *Old Testament* abounds with the Threatnings of God against a sinful and disobedient People; with Declarations of what they were to expect, if they did not repent and reform. Of this Sort, among many others, are his Messages to the Nation of the *Jews* by the Prophet *Jeremiah*, just before his sending them into Captivity.

Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my Soul depart from thee, lest I make thee desolate, a Land not inhabited. Jerem. vi. 6.

Because ye have done all these Works, and I spake unto you, but you heard not; and I called

called you, but you answered not.—Therefore I will cast you out of my Sight. Jerem. vii. 13, 15.

And in the *New Testament*, where St. Paul enumerates the Judgments of God upon the People of *Ijrael*, for their Provocations in the *Wilderness*; he presses those Examples upon the *Corinthians*, as the most forcible Argument to deter them from venturing upon the like Provocations. (1 Cor. x. 6.) Now, *these Things were our Examples, to the Intent we should not lust after evil Things, as they also lusted; and ver. 11. Now all these Things happened unto them for Ensamples, and they are written for our Admonition.*

But besides the Threatnings and Inflictions of *Temporal Judgments* in the *Old Testament*; we find a Threatning in the *New*, which, though of another Kind, must appear to every sincere Christian to be no less terrible. It is our Saviour's Message to the Church of *Ephesus*, by his Servant St. John, (Rev. ii. 5.) *Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first Works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy Candlestick out of his Place, except thou repent; that is, I will take from thee the pure Light of the Gospel, which thou hast hitherto enjoyed.* And does it not nearly concern the People of this Land, seriously to consider and lay to Heart the Unhappiness and Misery of having the Light of the *Scriptures* taken from them, as to all the Purposes of Instruction and Edification (while they are in a Language, which they are neither able, nor allowed to read;) and themselves left to be guided by the *Traditions* of Men,

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instead of the *Commandments* of God ; and further required, upon Pain of Damnation, to embrace Traditional Doctrines, which have not only no Authority from Scripture, our only true Rule, but have a direct Tendency to poison and eat out the very *Vitals* of Christianity. And after it has been seriously considered how terrible such a Judgment would be ; let it be always remember'd, what our Saviour tells the Church at *Ephesus*, as the only Means of preventing and escaping it, *viz.* EXCEPT YE REPENT.

And for our Encouragement to take that Course, as the sure Means of being delivered from Judgments, whether Temporal or Spiritual ; let us also remember the *gracious Declaration* which God made to his People, by the same Prophet that denounced his Judgments.

At what Instant, says God, I shall speak concerning a Nation, and concerning a Kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and destroy it.

If that Nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their Evil, I will repent of the Evil that I thought to do unto them. Jerem. xviii. 7, 8.

Which Readiness in God to spare and deliver, upon Repentance and Reformation, is most remarkably exemplified in his Dealing with the *Ninevites*. The Prophet *Jonah* was sent to them with this Message, *Yet forty Days and Nineveh shall be overthrown.* And then it follows ;

So the People of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a Fast, and put on Sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them.

And God saw their Works, that they turned from their evil Way; and God repented of the Evil that he had said that he would do unto them, and he did it not. Jonah iii. 4, 5, 10.

Thus hath God, in the Language of *Moses* to the Children of *Israel*, set before us. ¹ *Life* and *Death*, ² *Blessing* and *Cursing*. And may the same God grant, that, in the Language of our blessed Saviour, we may ³ *know*, at least in this our Day, the Things which belong unto our Peace, before they be hid from our Eyes. This is the hearty Desire and earnest Prayer of

Your faithful Friend and Pastor.

Edm'. London'.

¹ Deut xi. 26. ² Deut. xxx. 19. ³ Luke xix. 42.

POSTSCRIPT;

Setting forth the

Danger and Mischiefs

O F

P O P E R Y.

IN the Year 1706, an Address from several of the Gentry and Clergy in *Lancashire*, was presented to the House of Peers by the then Bishop of *Chester*, Sir *William Dawes*, complaining of the intolerable Boldness of the *Romish* Priests and Papists. Whereupon their Lordships represented to the Queen, that *it was absolutely necessary, for the Safety of her Majesty's Royal Person and Government, that a more watchful Eye should be had over them for the Future; and, for that Purpose, that a distinct and particular Account should be taken, of all Papists and reputed Papists in the Kingdom, with their respective Qualities, Estates, and Places of Abode.* Accordingly, the necessary Orders

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Orders were given by her Majesty, for taking a strict Survey of *Popery*, in the several Counties of the Kingdom; and at the same Time a Proclamation was issued for a vigorous Execution of the Laws against *Papists*.

In Conformity to these Resolutions, and to show the Reasonableness, or rather Necessity thereof; an Affize Sermon was preached by me, then Rector of *Lambeth*, from these Words of the Prophet *Hosea*, (vii. 9.) *Strangers have devoured his Strength, and he knoweth it not; yea, gray Hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth it not.* This was then published under the Title *Of the Growth and Mischiefs of Popery.* And the *Growth* of it being visibly *increased* since that Time, and the *Mischiefs* too sensibly Felt at present; a few extracts out of it, with some small Variations to bring it nearer to our present Circumstances, may possibly be of some Use to open the Eyes of our People, and to give them a clearer View than they seem yet to have, of the utter Inconsistency of *Papery* (unobserved and neglected to the Degree it has been) with the *Safety* and *Happiness* of this Protestant Country.

In the Chapter of which the Text is a Part, the Prophet is speaking of the Children of *Ephraim*, and the miserable Condition to which they had reduced themselves, by mixing with the Heathen Nations. He complains in the Verse immediately before the Text, that *Ephraim has mixed himself among the People*, that is, among the *Egyptians* and *Assyrians*; and what this Mixture was, we learn from several Parts of the Pro-

phesy, where they are charged with ¹ *making Images and Idols*, with ² *asking Counsels at their Stocks*, and with ³ *making many Altars to Sin*. The *Egyptians* and *Affyrians* had taken the Advantage of the Indulgence and Encouragement they found among them, and by the Benefit thereof had inticed many of the *Israelites* to join in their Idolatries. The Mischief whereof is expressed in the Text; That these *strangers* had *devoured* the Strength they had, while they continued unanimous in the Worship of the true God.

The terrible Effects of this their Indulgence to Idolatry, and Unconcernedness for the Worship of God, did not only come to pass as it had been foretold, but the Prophet himself lived to see it. By encouraging the Idolatrous Nations to the Prejudice of the true Religion, they had provoked God to Anger against them; and by suffering those Nations to seduce so many of the *Israelites* to Idolatry, they had exceedingly impaired their own Strength; and so, having made themselves ripe for Destruction, the King of *Affyria*, the Rod of God's Anger, found them an easy Prey, and carrying them into Captivity, placed his own People in their Stead.

Not to draw any *laboured* Parallel between the Kingdom of *Israel* with regard to *Pagan Idolators*, and the Condition of these Kingdoms with regard to *Popish Idolators*; Thus much is certain, That there is a People among us, whom we justly charge with *Idolatry*: That the Liberties they have taken for some Years past, have very much ex-

¹ Hof. iv. 12.² viii. 11.³ xiii. 2.

ceeded:

ceeded the Bounds which our Constitution has set them: That the Exercise of their Religion in all Parts of the Kingdom, has been carried on with much greater Boldness and Openness, than our Laws allow: That the Confidence of the Priests in their Attempts to seduce the Protestant Subjects of the Realm, has been beyond the Example of former Times; and, That presuming upon the Lenity and Tenderness of the Government, they have actually perverted many unwary and ignorant People.

By these Arts and Methods, too little observed and attended-to on our Part, have *Strangers* been suffered to corrupt our People, and *devour our Strength*; for in no other Light than that of *Strangers*, does our Constitution allow us to consider Papists and Popery. Strangers to us in *Religion*; Strangers in *Government*; and Strangers in *Interest*, and *Design*.

I. They are *Strangers* to us in *Religion*. By their Idolatries and Innovations, by perverting the Holy Scriptures, and raising their own Traditions to an equal Authority, they have exceedingly corrupted the *Faith* and *Doctrine* of the Gospel. Their *Worship* is overcharged with a vast Variety of Superstitious Rites, in which the true Spirit of Devotion is swallowed up and lost; they have changed the Substance for the Shadow, and, contrary to the Apostle's Rule, have made it a *Worship in the Letter*, and not in the *Spirit*. Their *Discipline* is wholly exercised by Emissaries from *Rome*, set up in Opposition to the Spiritual Governors of our Church, and acting under the im-

mediate Direction and Authority of a Foreign Head.

And because the Church of *England* has purged herself from these Idolatries, Superstitions, and Innovations, and rejecting their Traditions, has made the Scripture the Rule of her Faith, and has accommodated her Worship to the Word of God, and the true Ends of Devotion, and delivered herself from the insupportable Tyranny of the Papal Chair; By this Means, we are become *Hereticks* and *Schismatics* in the Account of the Church of *Rome*; as such, the Sentence of Excommunication is yearly denounced against us by the Pope, and our Destruction is declared to be a meritorious Work. And that all this is not mere Form and Ceremony, but a Direction zealously pursued where-ever it is practicable; we see by the bloody Inquisitions in some of the Popish Countries, with the terrible Persecution upon the Protestants in a neighbouring Nation, and the swift Approaches to the same Cruelties at Home, when that Spirit could shew itself with Safety, under the Influence of a Popish Prince.

Far be it from us, to make this merciless Treatment of *our* Brethren, a Rule of our Carriage and Behaviour towards *theirs*. We have not so learned Christ, as to think Fire and Faggot a fit Application to the *Consciences* of Christians, or to reckon the Destruction of their Bodies a proper Means for the Salvation of their Souls. But, methinks, these Cruelties towards Protestants in other Nations, should make the Papists in our own somewhat more modest and cautious; at least, they ought not to think themselves entitled thereby to *new* and *unusual* Liberties. And
though

though the good Nature and Religion of *Englishmen* forbid them to *copy* those Examples of Cruelty; we may well be allowed so far to *observe* and *remember* them, as to be jealous of the Growth of that Religion among ourselves, which in other Countries could animate the Professors of it to such inhuman Barbarities towards our Protestant Brethren.

II. They are also *Strangers* to us in *Government*. Princes can have no Hold of the Members of the Church of *Rome*, while they own a superior Head, who claims a Power of absolving Subjects from their Allegiance, and even Degrading and Excommunicating the Sovereign. And as this pretended Authority is chiefly exerted by the Pope against *Protestant* Princes, so are their People prepared to receive, approve, and execute his Sentences by another ungodly Doctrine, That no Faith is to be kept with Hereticks. And to what seditious and cruel Attempts these Principles have blown up some of the Members of that Church, can be unknown to none, who have looked into the History of these Kingdoms since the Beginning of Queen *Elizabeth's* Reign.

It is to be hoped, that many of our *English* Papists, having been born and bred in the same Air with ourselves, and receiving their Protection from the established Laws, have so good a Share of Tenderneſs and Gratitude, as to be Proof against these cruel Suggestions of the Emissaries from *Rome*. Bt it is also to be feared, that there will be a Number at all Times, of Condition and Inclination desperate enough to undertake such Enterprizes as are agreeable to the Principles

ciples of that Church, and shall be judged by their Infallible Guide to be a seasonable Service to the common Cause. And we may well suppose, that such Dispositions are the more strong and Numerous, at a Time when the whole Body of our Papists disown the Title of the Prince, in Favour of a Pretender of their own Religion; and that they are yet more ready and zealous to engage, since the Nation, sufficiently sensible that the *English* Constitution will not thrive under a Popish Prince, have cut off their Hopes of a Popish Successor for ever; except some bold and desperate Undertaking shall make his Way to the Throne.

It is far from the Temper of the *English*, and the Nature of our Constitution, to make Men *suffer* upon bare Presumptions: But, at the same Time, the Regard we owe to ourselves and our Constitution, calls upon us to be very *watchful*, when we are sure there is an Enemy in our own Bowels. When we find such a Spirit moving among us, it behoves us to observe narrowly *which Way* it moves, and to *what Degrees*; that it may be kept under such Restraints, as the Safety of Church and State shall require. Their Principles in Effect declare, and we are all abundantly convinced, that whatever Strength they have, will upon a fair Opportunity be employed against us; and therefore it nearly concerns us, to know the Extent of that Strength, and to be jealous of the Increase of it. It is the Voice of the Nation, that we have no *present* or *future* Security, under God, but in the Prosperity of His Majesty's Arms, and the Succession in the Protestant Line; and how then can we answer it to our Selves, our
Posterity,

Posterity, or our Religion, if we make it not our utmost Care, that they who we are sure have it in their *Will*, have it not also in their *Power*, to shake or undermine these Foundations of our Safety.

III. These Two Oppositions, in Religion, and Government, suppose a third Sort, namely, in *Interest* and *Design*: For the Spirit of that Religion is not want to lie still without Designs, much less to overlook any fair Opportunities of serving them. If ever there was a Juncture that obliged the Papists in Prudence and Decency to more than ordinary *Tenderness in giving Offence*, it is now; when their declared Disaffection to the Government makes them so *liable* to be suspected, and when the Success of *their* Aims and Wishes would evidently be the Ruin of *our* Laws and Religion. And it were happy for the Nation, and perhaps for themselves too, if their known Principles in Government and Religion were the *only* Testimony of their Designs. But this is a Happiness not to be hoped for, while their Priests are so open and bare-faced in making Profelytes of the weaker Sort, and (forgetting how shamefully they were baffled in a former Reign, and how obnoxious they are to the Laws at this Day) have not been afraid to send Challenges to the Ministers of our Church on Purpose to carry off their Profelyte in a Kind of publick Triumph, after they have made sure of him by private Arts: And further, while Priests and People rejoice at the Misfortunes of the Kingdom, and repine at any publick Prosperity and Success, with such Freedom and Openness as few other.

other Nations would bear. In a Word, instead of guarding against Suspensions, and a prudent Care not to give Offence or Jealousy, (a Behaviour that might well be expected in their present Circumstances) too many among them seem to be trying what Degrees of Provocation the Government will bear.

These Practices (we may hope) are condemned by the more *prudent* and *modest* Part of that Persuasion; who must therefore think it reasonable, that the established Constitution should provide for its own Safety; and if that Provision should happen to bring Inconveniencies upon them, they will lay the Blame where it ought to rest, that is, upon the intemperate Zeal of the Emissaries from *Rome*, and of others whom they have been able to work into these provoking Measures.

IV. We have already shown, how opposite they are in Religion and Government, and in all their Measures and Designs, to the established Constitution of Church and State. And the Consequence of this Opposition is, that what they gain, we lose; whatever new Strength or Spirits we suffer them to get, are all drained out of our own Body. Every Profelyte they make, immediately becomes our professed Enemy, not only in Religion, but in Policy too; lifting himself at the same Time under two foreign Heads, one in the Church, and the other in the State. And it is generally observed, that such Converts are more *remarkably active* and *furious* in the Cause they have espoused; Whether it is, that Fickle Heads are naturally fond of new Things,
or

or that they think it for their Honour to make a Show of a *thorough* Conviction.

And as every Convert to the Popish Religion becomes immediately a Zealot for a Popish Prince; so it is to be feared, at this Juncture, that the Zeal of some of our own Church for the pretended Prince of that Religion, proves the Occasion of making them Profelytes to the Religion itself. A Community of Measures and Wishes in the Affairs of State, naturally draws on a Correspondence and Good-liking between *them* and the Members of the Church of *Rome*; and the Courtesy which they find upon that Account from Papists, by Degrees wears off the Abhorrence of Popery; by which Means the Missionaries of that Church, who are not wont to neglect Opportunities, find their Access easy, and the work half-done to their Hands.

God be thanked, it is only upon the Weak and Ignorant, that this Poison works. The more discerning among them retain the same Detestation they ever had, of the manifold Corruptions of the Church of *Rome*; and a very learned ¹ Person of that Number has publickly warned the Nation of the Boldness and Success of the Priests in making Converts, and tells us, from his own Observation, the Arts and Methods by which they carry on their Work, and laments, that *the Growth of Popery among us should be greater than formerly, notwithstanding the Increase of Penal Laws.*

¹ Dr. Hicks, his Conference with a Popish Priest; in the Preface.

W^h The Truth is, those Penal Laws are so much softened, or rather laid aside, by the *English* Clemency and Good-nature, that it has long been the Wish of wise and considering Men, to see fewer Laws and more effectual Execution. They have lived so long under the Terror of Penal Laws, and found so little Inconvenience from them, that it will be hard to convince them that the Legislature is ever in Earnest. And yet I doubt these very Laws, being Part of our *English* Constitution, give a Handle to evil-minded Men Abroad, to enlarge upon the Sufferings of their *English* Brethren; and so while in great Tenderness, we are suspending our Laws at Home, we are reproached abroad as the most cruel Persecutors. This is but an ill Return for the great Indulgence that their Brethren have found among us; which should oblige both Priests and People, at least to do *Justice* to the Church of *England*; by confessing, that as the several laws they complain of were first made upon some remarkable Attempts of the Papists against the established Constitution of Church or State; so nothing but fresh Provocations of the same Kind has driven the *English* to the Execution of them. They know, that by the Laws of some other Countries, it is criminal to be a Protestant, and that the most peaceable Behaviour is no Protection; and they know as well, that it has not been the Papist as such, but only the *provoking, seditious, and turbulent* Papist, who has found any Disturbance from the *English* government.—To come to Particulars :

VI. In the Infancy of the Reformation under *Henry* the Eighth, the great Work was, to extirpate the Authority of the Pope, and establish the Supremacy of the Prince. Now both these the Point under our present Consideration *supposes* to be settled; which is not, by what Means the Papal Authority was excluded, but in what Way those who adhere to the Religion of the Pope, have been treated in a Country where his Authority was abolished. And it is well known, that the Disaffection of that Prince to the main *Doctrines* of Popery, was not so great as to induce him to any remarkable Hardships towards those who would at least be *silent* under his own Supremacy.

His Son King *Edward* the Sixth went further, and established ¹ *an Uniformity of Service and Administration of the Sacraments throughout the Realm*: But that Law only enjoined the Minister to use this and not the Mass Book; and the People, not to interrupt the Minister, or speak against the Service. And when it appeared by Experience, that the ² Missals which had been formerly used, were a great Obstruction to the Uniformity intended, they were only called in to give a more free and easy Passage to the *established* Service; without disturbing either Priest or People in the *private* Exercise of their Religion.

Notwithstanding the bloody Reign of Queen *Mary*; so far was her Successor the glorious Queen *Elizabeth* from the least Disposition to

¹ 2 & 3 Edw. 6. ² 3 & 4 Edw. 6. c. 10.

Cruelty, that she contented herself to restore the ¹ Supremacy and the Public Service to their former State ; allowing the Papists a Share in her Counsels ; and, in a subsequent Law against the Pope's Authority, exempting Peers of the Realm from the disabling Oath, and frequently declaring, that no Subject, who would live quietly and peaceably, should be disturbed on the Account of Religion.

'Tis true, the ² Laws afterwards grew more severe, but it was because the Papists grew more seditious. To execute *Bulls of Absolution* and *Reconciliation* from *Rome*, or to receive Absolution and Reconciliation in Virtue of such Bulls, was made High Treason. But let the History of the three preceding Years explain that Law, and determine whether it was owing to the Severity of Protestants or the Sedition of Papists. There we find, that the Pope had granted Authority to ³ *Saunders* and others, to absolve all the *English* who would return to the Church of *Rome*, and that they were very zealous in the Work ; That the same Pope had sent his ⁴ Bull into *England* by *Morton* the Priest, to anathematize the Queen, deprive her of the Throne, and absolve her Subjects from their Oaths of Obedience ; That in virtue thereof, many of the People were withdrawn from their Allegiance, a dangerous Rebellion raised, circular Letters sent to the Papists to rise and assist in the Cause, and the ⁵ Bull itself

¹ Camd. Ann. 1558. ⁵ Eliz. c. 1. ² 13 Eliz. c. 1. ³ Camd. Ann. 1568. ⁴ — 1569. ⁵ — 1570.

published in the City, in a very open and insolent Manner.

Ten years after, we find a new Enforcement of the Law against ¹ Bulls ; but it was because the Priests had found new Devices to evade the former Law, and to carry on the Work of *absolving* and *reconciling* by other Ways. We also find Penalties for saying and hearing of Mass ; but we find in the ² History of the same Time, that great Numbers of Priests were sent into *England* and *Ireland* from the Seminaries Abroad, under Pretence of preaching and administering the Sacraments, but really to withdraw the Subjects from their Obedience to the Queen. The same Law lays a Penalty upon absenting from Church, and, after a Year's Absence, enjoins the finding of Sureties for their Behaviour ; which is not to be thought strange or cruel, when the Emissaries of the Church of *Rome*, under whose Discipline the Absenters lived, were the professed Teachers of Rebellion, and when a Design had been detected between the *Spanish* King and the Pope, to dethrone the ³ Queen, and restore Popery in the Kingdom.

The next Law against Papists commands all ⁴ *Jesuits*, *Seminary* Priests, and others, to depart the Realm. But turn to the History of that Time, and there you will find great Numbers of Priests coming daily into *England*, who taught that the ⁵ Queen was no Queen, and that whatever had been done by her Authority since the

¹ 23 Eliz. c. 1. ² Camd. Ann. 1580. ³ Camd. Ann. 1578. ⁴ 27 Eliz. c. 2. ⁵ Camd. Ann. 1581.

Bull of Pope *Pius*, was null and void. The same Law forbids the sending of Children or Contributions to the Seminaries Abroad; and so the same ¹ Historian tells us of great Numbers of Children sent over to those Seminaries, and received there, on Condition that they first made a Vow to return, when they were instructed in their Learning and Discipline; that is, in the rankest Principles and Sedition of Rebellion.

While they were thus diligent in sending over their Emissaries to *Corrupt* the People, it is not to be wonder'd, that the great Council of the ² Land should countermine their Endeavours, by obliging all who should be found guilty of *Corrupting*, to *Abjure* the Realm. And if in the same Year, another ³ Law was made to banish Papists from Court, and confine them to the Neighbourhood of their own Dwellings; ⁴ our Histories will explain it, by shewing, that in the Compass of a very few years, several Designs had been formed and carried on, to *Assassinate* the Queen.

King ⁵ *James I.* began his Reign with a Revival of Queen *Elizabeth's* Laws against Popery; and well he might, when he reflected upon the many wicked Designs against the Person and Government of his Predecessor, and that, upon a Prospect of her Death, they had, in the most publick Manner, disputed his title to succeed.

Three Years after, we find ⁶ Papists confined, under higher Penalties, to their Places of Abode,

¹ Camd. Ann. 1580. ² 35 Eliz. c. 1. ³ 35 Eliz. c. 2. ⁴ Camd. Ann. 1584. 1585. 1586. 1587.
⁵ 1 Jac. c. 4. ⁶ 3 Jac. c. 4, 5.

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and greater Rewards proposed for the discovering of Priests, and express Declarations required, against the Pope's Authority to depose Princes, and absolve Subjects from their Obedience, and against dispensing with Oaths, and taking them with Equivocations and mental Reservations. But it is to be remembered, that all this was done upon the Discovery of the most hellish and execrable Plot that we read of in any Age or Nation, the Gunpowder-Treason; which, we all know, had been carried on by the Priests, upon those very *Principles*, to the Point of Execution.

To these Restraints there were added, in the Reign of King ¹ *Charles* the Second, the *Sacramental Test*, and the Exclusion of Papists out of the great Council of the Land. For the Occasion of which, I need not appeal to History: I may appeal to the Memory of Persons still living, for the Countenance given in that Reign to Popish Measures, and the Impatience of the Papists to put them in Execution, and the Attempts to shorten the Way for a Popish Successor to the Throne; who, when he came to the Throne, did abundantly justify the *Wisdom* of our Legislators, by making the Removal of that *Test*, one of his first Endeavours for the Establishment of Popery.

VII. It may be thought Presumption in one of our Order, and especially before this ² learned

¹ 25 *Car.* II. c. 2. 30 *Car.* II. c. 1. ² The Judges, &c.

Audience, to intermeddle in the Laws and Statutes of the Realm; but it will be favourably considered, that they are Laws which concern *Religion*, and are only cited in an *Historical* Way; that, by comparing the seditious Practices of the Papists, as recorded in our Histories, with the several Laws they have occasioned; it may appear at one View, That the Papists have been the sole Authors of their own Misfortunes; That these Restraints, from Time to Time, were brought upon them by Rebellion, and not (as they pretend) by Religion; That the *English* Legislature have proceeded in their Restraints *Gradually*, as the repeated Attempts of the Papists upon the Persons and Government of our Princes, have rendered them necessary; and, That nothing can extort a sanguinary Law from the *English* Temper, but an indispensable Regard to their own Religion and Government.

But what Severity soever may be pretended in the *Laws*, it is very certain there is none in the *Execution*. And he who considers how strict the Laws, and how high the Penalties are against any Priest, who shall attempt to pervert a Subject to Popery, or shall say Mass, or even be found in the Realm; and against all others who shall harbour a Priest in their Houses, or send Children or Money to a Seminary Abroad; Whoever, I say, is apprized of the high Penalties upon these Practices, (to name no more) and then considers how common and familiar they are among us, will see how little Mischief the Papists fear from these terrible Laws
they

they complain of, and how much they are indebted to the Goodness and Tenderness of the *English* Government.

But they must not hope that the *English* Good-nature will hold out against all Provocations: The Laws will rouse themselves, and break loose at the Sight of such unprecedented Freedom and Boldness, as we have beheld of late Days. It is a known Crime in the Eye of the Law, to import Popish Books from Abroad; but we have seen them printed and published at Home, and dispersed over the Nation with the greatest Industry; and not only so, but ¹ we have seen Advertisements of the Place where a Variety of Popish Books were to be publickly sold. They know it is capital to attempt the perverting of a Protestant Subject; which should oblige them at least to carry on the Work with far greater *Caution* and *Secrecy*, than they seem to think needful. They are strictly forbidden to send Children to the Seminaries abroad; but if a publick ² Complaint was well grounded, (as I doubt not but it was) they are now beginning to bring the Seminaries Home.

VIII. These and the like Provocations stirred up the ³ Government to take a strict Survey of the State of Popery in the Kingdom, in order to apply some effectual Remedy to that growing Evil. And as long as the Priests of the Church

¹ Ann. 1707. ² In Convocation: of a Seminary
in *Hampshire*. ³ Ann. 1706.

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of *Rome* are so very busy and active in their Work, it can never be an unbecoming Part in the Ministers of a Protestant Church, to lay to Heart the visible Increase of Popery, and to warn the People how zealous they are in promoting it; that so, we may raise an *equal* Zeal and Concern, for the true Protestant Religion established among us.

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for W. JOHNSTON.

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